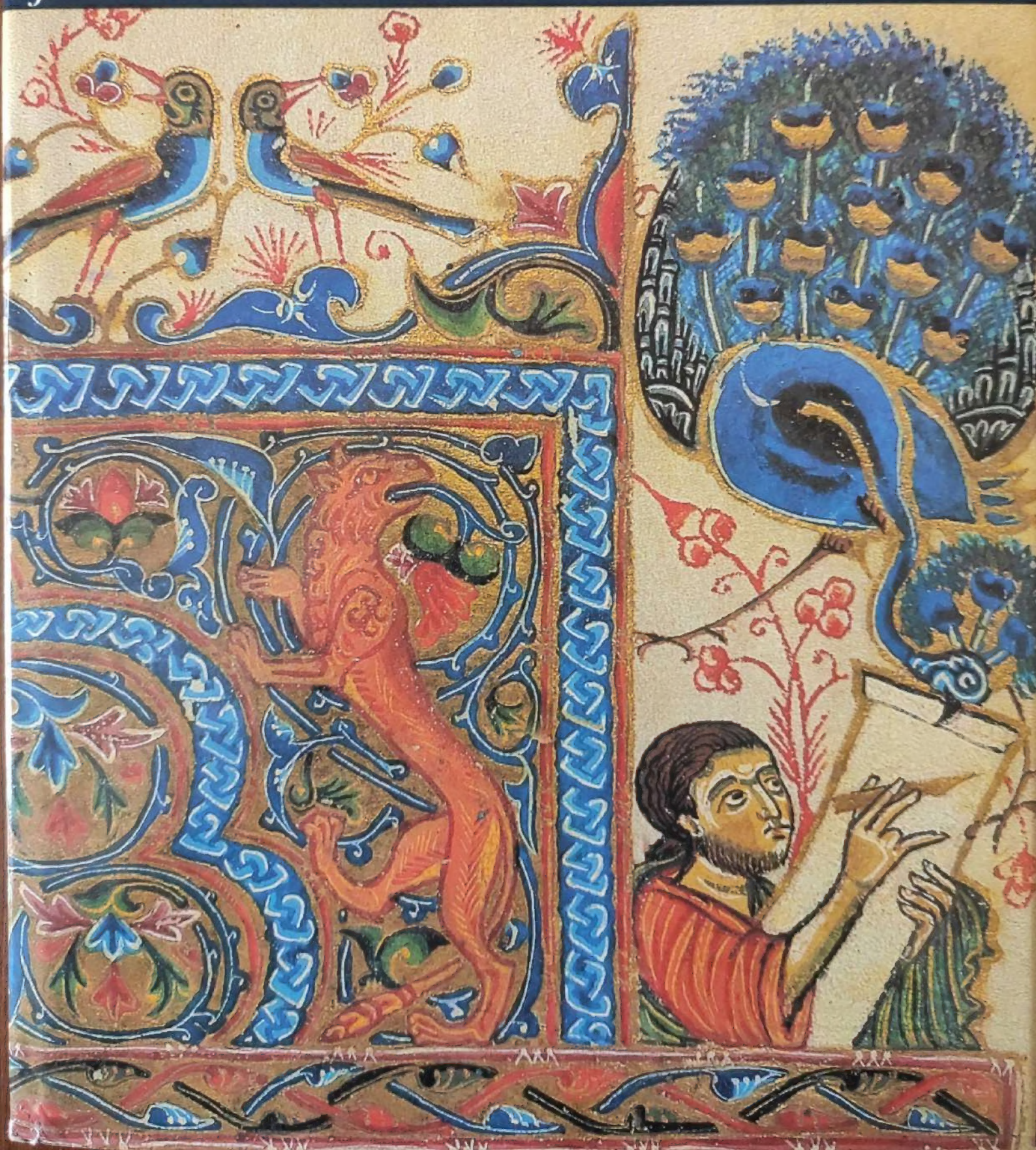


# ARMENIAN MINIATURES

THE MATENADARAN  
COLLECTION, YEREVAN

*of the 13th and 14th centuries*





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from the  
**MATENADARAN  
COLLECTION**

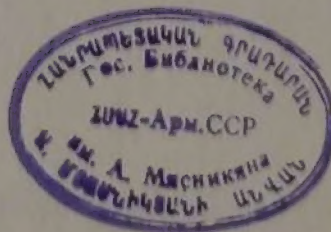
Yerevan

AURORA ART PUBLISHERS • LENINGRAD



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*Two different forces, two opposite tendencies, which intertwined, intermingled and, eventually, merged into a new complex impetus, governed the life of Armenia and moulded the character of its people for many centuries: the Western tendency and the Oriental tendency, the spirit of Europe and the spirit of Asia.*

Valery Briusov<sup>1</sup>

These words of the early twentieth-century Russian poet Valery Briusov give a true and vivid picture of the history of Armenia – an ancient state dating back to the sixth century B.C. Present-day Armenia covers the major part of the Armenian plateau in the north-east of Asia Minor. For centuries Armenia was the scene of wars between the great empires of ancient times and those of the Middle Ages.

Despite all the cataclysms of its dramatic history, despite the disastrous wars in which Armenia rose up in arms against its enemies, no matter how strong they were, the Armenian people remained faithful to the traditions of their national culture which they never ceased to enrich and develop. That is why Armenian soil abounds in artistic and cultural wealth, that is why to this day one admires its numerous architectural monuments in which excellent building technique is combined with the beauty of wall reliefs and frescoes, its unique *khatchkars*<sup>2</sup> covered with exquisite carving, its beautiful examples of decorative arts, and, finally, its famous miniatures that reflect the highest achievements of medieval Armenian painting.

Unfortunately, due to Armenia's turbulent history many of the cultural monuments created by the Armenian people were destroyed or plundered and have not reached us in their original beauty. But while wall reliefs and frescoes often perished in the course of wars or natural disasters, illuminated manuscripts could be hidden from the enemy or saved from the ruinous forces of nature. Consequently, we can now speak of a fairly large and representative collection of old Armenian manuscripts. Thus, in Yerevan, in the Matenadaran manuscript library bearing the name of Maesrob Mashtotz, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, there are over thirteen thousand Armenian manuscripts, complete or fragmentary. Many others are to be found in various museums and libraries throughout the world. These manuscripts originated from many different religious and cultural centres which existed in Armenia and also, in certain historical periods, in Armenian settlements outside the country. About a thousand and a half such centres are known to have existed in Armenia alone.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Armenia proper had no sovereign government of its own and was ruled by invaders. The brief period of political independence in the late twelfth and the early thirteenth century when, with the help of Georgia, Armenia freed itself from the Seljuk yoke and when art and culture flourished in the independent Armenian principality governed by the Zakharids, was followed by a period of new invasions. Between 1220 and 1250 Armenia was invaded by the Mongols, who by that time had conquered the whole of Transcaucasia over which they established their political and administrative control.

While recognizing, of necessity, the sovereign power of the Mongols, some Armenian feudal barons managed to retain a certain independence which contributed to the further development of national culture in many parts of the occupied country. Thus, the second half of the thirteenth century saw the appearance of magnificent new churches and palaces, accompanied by the revival of educational institutions and scriptoria producing illuminated manuscripts. Schools of higher learning – universities or academies – became particularly important. Although they had existed in Armenia before, it was during this period that the monastery schools turned into centres of education and enlightenment where the traditions of national culture were not only preserved but developed and



enriched. Among such institutions were the academies in Gladsor and Tatev which flourished in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Their curriculum included philosophy, theology, rhetoric, grammar, and also music, painting and calligraphy. The Gladsor academy was known at the time as the second Athens. "It was almost of the same age as one of the most influential centres of European science – the University of Paris, and could compete with the latter in terms of its cultural and educational significance as well as by virtue of the treasures in its library and of the versatility of its curriculum."<sup>3</sup>

That Armenia proper lost its political independence was to a certain extent compensated for by the flourishing of Cilician Armenia – a state which had been established on the north-east coast of the Mediterranean in the eleventh century and existed up to the late fourteenth century. Its advantageous geographical position, which among other things provided for close contact with important Mediterranean trade centres, and the well-balanced policy of its rulers who sought to ensure the peaceful existence of their country, stimulated the rapid development of culture and art, which was characteristic of Cilician Armenia throughout the entire period of its existence, until it fell to the Egyptians at the end of the fourteenth century.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries marked the heyday of Armenian manuscript illumination, which by that time was already represented by a number of different trends and schools. Thus, miniatures from the north-east of Armenia were characterized by a monumental quality in the treatment of their subjects and by richness of colour; the Vaspurakan miniatures were distinguished by simplicity and a certain degree of stylization; the works produced in Bardsr Hayk (High Armenia) combined the stateliness of figures with versatility of ornamentation, while the miniatures of Cilicia were remarkable for their elegance and refinement. The greatest difference is observed between the productions of Armenia proper and Cilician Armenia. Lydia Dournovo, in her *Essays on Pictorial Art in Medieval Armenia*, wrote: "While being essentially Armenian, that is to say retaining the basic features of the national character, these two branches of one and the same tree differ markedly from each other. Within a short period the Cilician miniatures acquired a brilliancy of technique and a depth of expression characterized by a uniformity of style but at the same time betraying an interest in the Western Renaissance. The miniatures of Armenia proper, on the other hand, which are less exquisite but more monumental and original, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries paved the way for the development of many local trends and schools, while preserving their unique expressive language unparalleled in contemporary painting."<sup>4</sup>

Coming into close contact with other national cultures, the Armenians reinterpreted what they saw in accordance with their own world outlook, with their own artistic ideal and taste. Sometimes their national traditions prevailed over foreign influence, sometimes the leading role was assumed by the latter. But national identity was invariably preserved, and that accounts for the "unique expressive language" of the Armenian miniatures, "unparalleled in contemporary painting", to quote the words of Lydia Dournovo.

Today we can admire works by many wonderful masters of Armenian miniature painting, such as Mkhitar Yerzinkatsi, Toros Taronatsi, Avag, Grigor, Simeon Ardjishetsi and Vardan. Among the Cilician artists Grigor Mlidgetsi, Toros Roslin, Hovhannes and Sargis Pidzak are the most remarkable, while Avetis, Stepanos, Christosatur, Mkhitar Anetsi and other artists stand out among the masters of the Armenian colonies outside the country. Unfortunately not all the pieces that have reached us bear the signatures of the scribes and illuminators.

This edition presents miniatures by outstanding Armenian masters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from the Matenadaran in Yerevan. The majority of the works reproduced are published here for the first time.



## GREATER ARMENIA

**BARDSR HAYK (HIGH ARMENIA).** Many of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century miniatures now in existence originated in monastic scriptoria of Bardsr Hayk, a province in the north-west of old Armenia. A number of important routes running through Bardsr Hayk ensured the rapid growth of trade and crafts and of the arts and culture. In addition, this part of Armenia must have had considerable significance in so far as religion was concerned – both in heathen times, when there were many places of worship, and following the conversion to Christianity, when the first Armenian centres propagating the new religion were established. An imagery based on heathen concepts found its way into Christian art where it was reinterpreted and adapted to the new ideology.

The manuscripts of Bardsr Hayk were always lavishly decorated with vegetal motifs including pointed crescent-shaped leaves and swirling leaves with palmettes. Similar motifs are to be found in the art of the eastern part of Asia Minor, which dates back to heathen times. But while the more ancient of the known miniatures were characterized by a fairly realistic treatment of these motifs, the later examples gradually became more and more stylized until they reached a conventional form typical of the medieval art of Transcaucasia and the Middle East.<sup>5</sup> Beautiful examples of such ornamentation, which served as the basis for several main types of the marginal miniatures, or marginals,<sup>6</sup> can be found in the largest of old Armenian manuscripts – a collection of homilies entitled *The Mush Homiliarium* and produced in 1202 at the Avagvank monastery near the town of Yerzynka (Ms. 7729, Pls. 1, 2). The text of the manuscript is written in an exceptionally beautiful *erkatagir* (large uncial script), and the illumination includes numerous headpieces and marginal ornaments based on ancient decorative patterns. The turn of the twelfth century in Armenia was the time when the basic principles of manuscript illumination were being established and developed. That is why the decor of the *Mush Homiliarium* reflects both the artist's own interpretation of already existing and well-established forms and his quest for novel ornamental patterns. The illumination of this manuscript in all probability was a joint effort of three different masters, although only one name, that of Stepanos, has come down to us. Stepanos was responsible for the title-page (Pl. 1) and some of the marginals, whose main distinctive feature is their somewhat graphic character. An unmistakably different hand is traced in another group of marginals which were no doubt done by a more original and bold artist. This intricate floral ornamentation invades the margins and is supplemented by pictures of birds and animals, both fantastic and real. The colouring is based on contrasting hues, oranges set off by dark browns, light blues by the dark velvety sheen of ultramarine. The third artist's contribution to the book is confined to a few historiated miniatures.

Another remarkable illuminated manuscript linked to the former work by virtue of both the time and place of its production – the Gospels of 1201 (Ms. 10359, Pls. 3, 4) – also has a similarity to it in the general arrangement and system of illumination. Its decor is likewise based on vegetal ornamentation, covering the entire vacant space within the headpieces of the first pages of the Gospels and the *khorans*;<sup>7</sup> the prevailing motif here is that of crescent-shaped leaves. The composition of each folio is distinguished by a balance of proportions between text and decorative elements.

Sometimes the Bardsr Hayk manuscripts were decorated only by line drawings in the margins instead of full-colour miniatures. Such drawings might be purely ornamental or of a historiated variety, occasionally including portrayals of important clerical or secular figures and of various saints. One such manuscript is the 1362 Lectionary – a collection of Gospel readings (Ms. 4519, Pl. 6), also written and illuminated in the town of Yerzynka. The arrangement of the drawings on the pages is highly original, although this cannot be said of the drawings themselves. The latter were



undoubtedly derived from more accomplished antecedents, two of which have been preserved: the 1331 manuscript from the Jerusalem collection (Ms. 95) and the 1334 volume in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York (Ms. 803).<sup>8</sup>

Some of the Bardsr Hayk illuminated manuscripts resemble those produced in other centres of Armenian culture. This is only natural, for in those troubled times migration within the country was a matter of course, and Bardsr Hayk, along with other western regions, often became a point of destination for people from central Armenia, for migrants from the town of Ani and from the provinces of Vaspurakan and Taron, for example. The cultural traditions brought along by the immigrants penetrated the local culture of Bardsr Hayk, particularly its written and decorative tradition as reflected in the illuminated manuscripts. Sometimes the colophons,<sup>9</sup> for instance one found in a Yerzynka manuscript of 1318, bear witness to such examples of forced migration: "Driven by the grievous times I had to change my place of abode on five occasions before I could complete the manuscript ..."<sup>10</sup>

It is often impossible to determine the place where a manuscript was produced, and one can only speak of certain local stylistic tendencies characteristic of this or that master and consequently of the school to which he belonged. The Gospel of 1232 (Ms. 2743, Pls. 7–10) illuminated by Grigor is a case in point. Although Grigor's miniatures are stylistically evocative of the decorative art of Bardsr Hayk and of the murals in the cave temples in the adjacent Cappadocia, they possess a strongly individual character. The dramatic intensity of the images, the depth of the colouring in which occasional flashes of red and pink stand out against a background of dark blue and purple, produce a striking impression which outweighs a certain inaccuracy of drawing. Nothing is known about the life of this remarkable artist, as unfortunately is often the case with medieval masters.

ANI. Among those centres of written culture whose production has for the most part been lost in the course of history, the scriptoria and libraries of the ancient kingdom of Ani occupy a prominent position. By the early thirteenth century, when the kingdom had long ceased to exist, the town of Ani still retained its significance as a large trading centre where art, culture and various crafts continued to develop under the favourable auspices of the Zakharid dynasty. Some spectacular ruins at Ani have survived to this day, and one can still admire the vestiges of stone reliefs and frescoes.

The few examples of the Ani manuscript tradition which have reached us reflect the new tendencies in book illumination characteristic of the time when urban settlements and urban residents – particularly merchants and craftsmen – were beginning to play an important role in the development of national culture. This is what Lydia Dournovo wrote on the subject: "The gradually growing middle class was naturally promoting its own culture which differed from the culture of the aristocracy or the common people. This class had none of the vanity and pride of the upper classes nor of their extravagant ambition to create magnificent monuments or art objects. On the other hand, the middle class was no longer satisfied with the laconic simplicity and naive sincerity of folk art – this class had a wider range of vision, a broader outlook. What it expected from art, particularly from books, was a detailed story with explanations and digressions, a story accompanied by illustrations and ornament, catching the eye by the versatility of motifs rather than by beauty of form."<sup>11</sup>

Works by only two Ani illuminators – Markare and Ignatios – have survived. The Gospels of 1211 (Ms. 6288, Pls. 12, 13) written in the monastery of the village of Akhpat, was bound and illuminated by Markare in the monastery of Horomos, near Ani. The new tendency manifested itself in this manuscript in the broadened range of motifs, enriched by details of everyday life, and in the secular treatment of images. The trend towards realism is also reflected in the only miniature repre-



sending the Gospel subject – The Entry into Jerusalem (Pl. 13), where both the townscape and the figures of people meeting Christ were obviously inspired by real-life observations.

The other of the two masters – Ignatios – also worked in Horomos, during the first half of the thirteenth century. He was witness to the beginning of the Mongol invasion, and his painful experience was reflected in the inscription he made on one of the manuscripts he decorated: “In times of trouble and misery [was the book written] when Ani was in the enemy’s hands...” and when “there was destruction and devastation in towns and villages...”<sup>12</sup>

It is known that Ignatios was taken prisoner by the Mongols, but was released soon afterwards and resumed his work as a manuscript illuminator. The colophon of one of his manuscripts reads: “The times are cruel, and for four years now have I worked with the book propped up by the palm of my hand...”<sup>13</sup>

Even when they were forced to wander about the country in search of safety, Armenian scribes and artists continued their work and produced beautiful manuscripts. Sometimes entire schools – pupils led by their master – had to seek shelter far from their native town or village. Thus, it is known that Vanakan (“the great teacher”, as he was called by his contemporaries) gave lectures during the Mongol invasion to his pupils in a cave near the Tavush fortress. His pupil Vartan Areveltsi, who in his turn became a teacher, wandered all over Armenia with his school, trying to avoid the invaders.

Although the Mongol invasion interrupted the peaceful life of Armenia, some princes – for example, those in the provinces of Siunik and Khachen – in order to retain their power and the relative independence of their principalities, chose to enter into diplomatic negotiations with the invaders. As a result, in the fourteenth century a somewhat shaky peace prevailed in certain parts of the country, and peace, among other things, meant a progress of cultural life.

SIUNIK (a province to the south-east of Lake Sevan) was one such region, and it was here that the last two Armenian medieval academies – Gladsor and Tatev – were founded and prospered. The Gladsor academy, or university, set up in the second half of the thirteenth century on the basis of a monastery, had a very high reputation throughout the country. It was not a monastery in the ordinary sense of the word, but a true university, and many people from different parts of Armenia, even from far-away Cilicia, came to Gladsor to study or to perfect their knowledge. Among the teachers at Gladsor were many celebrated scholars of the time – Nerses Mshetsi, founder of the university, a scholar who “knew the tongue of the Greeks well”, and Yesai Ntchetsi, rhetorician, philosopher and a prominent political figure. Many future famous scientists and historians were educated at the university of Gladsor, which was also a cultural centre with its own manuscript tradition and school of book illumination.

The medieval miniature art of Siunik was strongly influenced by the local ancient tradition of ornamentation. But even though the khorans and marginals mostly comprised motifs and symbols of pre-Christian art – totems, allegories of good and evil or of the forces of nature (dragons, unicorns, griffins, etc.), the Siunik miniature of the thirteenth century revealed an obviously realistic tendency. Another distinctive feature of Siunik art of that period was its affinity to the Cilician artistic tradition, and this is accounted for by the fact that the academies of Siunik attracted numerous laymen and priests from Cilicia; some of them must have been artists.

Local traditions found their most consistent manifestation in work by the artist Mateos, illustrator of the 1292 Gospel (Ms. 6292). This manuscript strikes by the splendour of its illumination, based on large-scale floral ornamentation and often including birds – magnificent peacocks



spreading their gorgeous tails. The birds are always presented in pairs, either with lowered heads, drinking water, or with their slender necks intertwined.

The work of another Gladsor artist – Momik, architect, stone-carver and miniaturist – is remarkable for its exquisite lyricism and its profound poetic character hitherto unknown to medieval Armenian art. These qualities are particularly apparent in his khatchkars, whose delicate carving makes one forget the solidity and weight of stone, and in his miniature painting which is permeated by the poetic sincerity of feeling characteristic of folk art. There are two manuscripts illuminated by Momik in the Matenadaran (Ms. 6792, Pls. 15, 16; Ms. 2848). The artist liked to fill the background of his scenes with bluish semicircles reminiscent of clouds, which served to emphasize the holy nature of the events depicted. The compositional schemes of the miniatures are markedly symmetrical, with perfect balance of proportions.

Toros Taronatsi, of Gladsor, was one of the most productive artists of that school. A pupil of Yesai Ntchetsi, he was not only a talented miniaturist but also a poet of renown. His early miniatures were strongly influenced by the ancient traditions of local pictorial art. His khorans and borders abound in fantastic monsters – human-headed birds (sometimes having two heads), snakes and dragons, symbols of evil, fighting with each other or tearing at their prey, or else, according to the Christian tradition, slain by warrior-saints who are trampling their prostrate bodies. The khorans of the 1318 Bible (Ms. 206, Pl. 17), for example, are so lavishly decorated that very little space is left for the Canon tables themselves.

Later works by Taronatsi betray the considerable influence of Cilician miniature painting, manifested above all in the deliberately decorative character of the illumination, in the types and motifs of ornament and in the general arrangement of khorans and first pages of the Gospels (Ms. 6289, Pls. 21, 22; Ms. 353). At the same time, certain iconographic features and images, as, for example, the image of the Virgin suckling the infant Christ, suggest some knowledge of Western art.

The creative career of Avag, a wandering artist, was also (apart from the time he worked in Cilicia and Iran) linked with Gladsor. The Cilician influence in his miniatures is even stronger than in those by Taronatsi, for Avag spent several years in Cilicia where he, together with the local artist Sargis Pidzak, produced an illuminated Gospel (Ms. 7631).

The Matenadaran collection includes several works by Avag, the most remarkable of them being the Gospels of 1337 (Ms. 212, Pls. 18–20), lavishly illustrated with initials, marginals, and miniatures incorporated into the text. They were inspired by the works of Toros Roslin and other celebrated Cilician masters. On the whole, the art of Avag, having absorbed both Armenian and Cilician traditions, was somewhat eclectic. But the superb quality of their execution and a specific combination of grandeur and refinement make his miniatures uncommonly attractive in spite of their eclecticism.

The Gladsor academy ceased to exist with the death of Yesai Ntchetsi in 1338, but its traditions survived in other monastery schools of Armenia, in Metsop, Yerzynka, and particularly in the academy of Tatev which, after Gladsor, was the second most famous educational institution in Armenia. Grigor Tatevatsi – a prominent politician, philosopher and artist – was the head of the Tatev academy for many years. Evidence of his creative gift, the Gospels of 1297 containing historiated miniatures, portraits of the Evangelists and ornamented first pages done by Tatevatsi in 1378, is to be found among the treasures of the Matenadaran Library (Ms. 7482, Pls. 23–26). The distinctive feature of these miniatures is their skilful utilization of folk ornamental motifs. The background is filled with large-scale monochrome ornament reminiscent of a multicoloured carpet decorating the wall in a peasant cottage. This ornamental background imparts a certain homely intimacy to the depicted scenes, such as *The Virgin and Child* (Pl. 24) and *The Annunciation* (Pl. 25). The figures in the



miniatures impress by their tranquil solemnity, and the impasto quality and the mat paint layer produce a fresco-like effect.

The same predilection for lavish ornamentation and a similar technique characterize the miniatures in another Gospel manuscript in the Matenadaran collection (Ms. 6305, Pls. 28–31). Although its exact date and place of origin remain unknown and only the first name of the artist, Grigor, has been preserved, a comparison with works by Tatevatsi and by several other Siunik miniaturists provides sufficient grounds for roughly attributing the illustrations in this volume to the Tatev, or rather the Siunik school of miniature painting of the late fourteenth or the early fifteenth century.

The Gospel is richly decorated with miniature scenes, or historiated miniatures, with khorans and marginals, but only a small number of miniatures are fully coloured: the rest are either mere outline drawings or only slightly tinted pictures. At the same time, unlike the Tatevatsi manuscript with its characteristic carpet-like backgrounds, Grigor's Gospel is a veritable symphony of ornamental forms and motifs, executed in a rich variety of colours. The background, including the architectural elements, the furniture, the dresses of the characters – everything is covered with minute floral patterns. For this reason, the volume is known as the "Chintz Manuscript". The versatility of motifs, the vivid presentation of characters and the soft light colouring give a lively and festive appearance to the miniatures and ornamentation in the book. Four illustrations in the volume – the full-page portraits of four warrior-saints – are of special interest. The saints are depicted as the protectors of the Armenian people enslaved by invaders.

Among those Matenadaran manuscripts whose colophons have been lost there are three remarkable fourteenth-century Gospels (Ms. 318, Pls. 33, 34; Ms. 4060, Pls. 35, 36; Ms. 7699, Pl. 27) whose origin has only recently been established. The style of illumination in these Gospels is a synthesis of Cilician tradition and the traditions of the Palaeologan Renaissance<sup>14</sup> with its Hellenistic flavour and a quest for a more realistic pictorial representation. In the miniatures illustrating these manuscripts the emphasis is put not on the colour contrasts (although their role still remains important), but on the chiaroscuro effects. This seems to be a tentative attempt to master a new technique, but an attempt which is significant in that it indicates a new step in the development of miniature art and in the creative pursuits of artists looking for new expressive devices. At the same time the treatment of the background and of certain details remains schematic, and the general effect is therefore that of a mixture of different artistic principles. The new approach is mainly confined to the figural representation. In the solid tangibility of figures, in the less rigid composition, in the animation of the faces and in the soft treatment of forms, the illustrations to the three Gospel books are evocative of fourteenth-century Slav art and also of miniatures in some illuminated manuscripts produced in Armenian colonies in the Crimea (e.g. of the illustrations added in the Crimea to the Gospels of Constable Smbat; see Pls. 161, 162). Other similar miniatures can be found in the 1343 Gospel in the Mekhitarist Library in Venice (Ms. 1584/181), which was produced in a small Armenian settlement of Surkhat in the Crimea. The similarity between the above unsigned manuscripts and the ones which are definitely known to have come from the Crimea leads to the conclusion that the former are also likely to have been produced in the Crimea at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Among the works whose place of origin has not been definitely established but which were most probably produced in the Crimea, one should mention a miniature portrait of Grigor Tatevatsi (Ms. 1203, Pl. 32). Grigor was Rector of the academy of Tatev and a celebrated Armenian scholar and politician. He is shown against the background of a church, surrounded by his pupils. The portrait is evidently a good likeness, which is vindicated by a contemporary description of Grigor's appearance, and is therefore a unique example of portrait representation of a late-fourteenth-century personality.



Towards the end of the fourteenth century the economic and political situation in Armenia grew steadily worse, which could not but have an unfavourable influence on cultural life: *one by one* many monastic scriptoria cut down on their production of manuscripts. The art of manuscript illumination was only kept alive in the remote monasteries of South and East Armenia. The schools of book illustration which developed in the province of Vaspurakan and in neighbouring provinces represented the highest achievements of Armenian miniature painting of that time.

VASPURAKAN was a province of Armenia proper which extended to the north-east and south of Lake Van. From the twelfth to the ninth century B.C. this area was occupied by one of the most ancient states in the Middle East, and it was here that the state of Armenia was later founded. In the early Middle Ages Vaspurakan was a principality of Greater Armenia, but in the ninth–eleventh centuries it became an independent kingdom ruled by the Artzrunid dynasty. As in many Armenian provinces during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, monastic scriptoria of Vaspurakan produced illuminated manuscripts. The artists working in these secluded monasteries usually had a modest, non-aristocratic background, and their art, accordingly, was inspired by and adapted to the tastes of the common people.

The Vaspurakan school was one of the most prolific in Armenia. Its legacy now amounts to almost 1,500 manuscripts, the majority of which are illustrated. Among the distinctive features of Vaspurakan book illustration is the specific position of historiated miniatures. According to the age-long local tradition, they opened each volume, preceding the Canon tables as a kind of pictorial overture to the text.

Another distinctive feature of the manuscripts produced in Vaspurakan is the great variety of motifs used in the miniatures. Thus, the Vaspurakan Gospels often combine miniatures on traditional Gospel subjects with those based on the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. Old Testament subjects usually come first and sometimes contain details suggested by real-life observations. The Christian motifs in these miniatures are often interspersed with vestiges of pagan pantheism. The subjects most popular with the Vaspurakan artists were The Genesis, The Sacrifice of Isaac, The Trinity (Visitation under the Oak-Tree at Mamre) and some others. Among the New Testament scenes depicted by many masters were The Massacre of the Innocents, and scenes showing the miracles performed by Christ (The Raising of Lazarus, The Healing of the Blind, etc.). Some artists showed preference for apocryphal motifs, such as, for example, The Meeting of St. Joseph and Eve. Characteristically, in treating these subjects the artists often concentrated on such details as could be associated with certain events in their own life or the life of their homeland.

According to S. Der Nersessian, juxtaposition of New Testament scenes with scenes from the Old Testament, symbolically connected with the former, first appeared in Armenian art as early as the ninth century. This tendency was also characteristic of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Vaspurakan miniatures. They were based on an ancient local tradition which found an earlier manifestation in the reliefs and frescoes adorning the tenth-century church of the Holy Cross on the island of Aghtamar.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the scene of The Sacrifice of Isaac with which the series of Gospel illustrations usually opens was inspired in the case of several artists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Simeon Ardjishetsi, Zachariah, Daniel) by the iconographically identical relief in the church of the Holy Cross. Another artist, Ovsian, who painted The Last Supper (the only example in fourteenth-century Vaspurakan manuscripts), had evidently emulated an eleventh-century version of this subject found, for instance, in a volume produced in 1038 (Ms. 6201). The same tendency of adhering to old traditions can be traced in the Crucifixion scenes, with allegorical representations of the Sun



and Moon, and also in the composition of such subjects as *The Adoration of the Magi* and *The Resurrection*, which apparently goes back to the tenth- and eleventh-century models. Certain details of the earlier paintings are sometimes repeated in later versions, for example "group portraits" of the Four Evangelists, although beginning with the eleventh century the custom prescribed to depict them separately, each portrayal opening the corresponding Gospel.

Vaspurakan miniatures were based on symbolic dogmatism accompanied by certain elements of folk art imagery. This combination accounts for the distinguishing features of their iconography and of their subjects: namely, the great role played by images linked with ancient symbolism and apocryphal legends. They are also remarkable for their stylistic features: the general composition and the treatment of individual scenes are determined by the essentially linear character of the drawing. The line as the main expressive device is supported by rich and clear colours.

The lack of perspective in the composition and drawing, typical of medieval art in general, is more conspicuous in the Vaspurakan miniatures than elsewhere. Works by Vaspurakan artists are distinguished by a traditional disregard of the optical approach and by a two-dimensional, frieze-like representation of scenes in which figures and objects fill the entire surface of the picture. The figures are usually presented in a frontal view, and their energetic gestures are so expressive that they seem to combine several movements in one. The whole range of pictorial devices used by the authors of these miniatures has but one purpose – the achievement of the utmost clarity and vividness in the expression of the main idea, the essence of the subject, irrespective of whether the picture in question possesses a narrative or symbolic character. With that purpose in mind, Vaspurakan artists tended to replace real-life details by certain symbolic signs, thus revealing, wholly or partially, the idea underlying the scene depicted. The general harmony distinguishing Vaspurakan miniatures was achieved through the canonical arrangement of figures and the peculiar rhythm of their movements, which went beyond the limits of ordinary gestures and acquired a more profound significance symbolizing perpetual motion. It was not merely the course of action or its outward characteristics which were important for the artist, nor the pictorial representation of movement, but the conceptual side of the represented event or motif.

Although limited by these artistic principles and using mainly traditional forms based on methods and devices of folk art, Vaspurakan artists created a number of works marked by a certain degree of individuality.

Among the numerous distinctive features of Vaspurakan miniatures are rhythmical repetition of forms, stylized pictorial representation of ornamented dress, a characteristic facial type, with elongated eyebrows and eyelashes, and, last but not least, their deliberate decorativeness which, combined with the somewhat schematic drawing and the dynamic intensity of images, enhances the great expressive potentialities of these miniatures.

Book artists in the province of Vaspurakan were often also skilful in other crafts, such as stone-carving, jewellery-making and carpet-weaving, and this enabled them to enrich their technique of illuminating and decorating manuscripts, many of which are provided with gold and silver filigree-work covers and with multi-coloured printed pieces of cloth pasted onto the inner side of the covers.

The influence of folk art on Vaspurakan miniatures also manifested itself in the peculiar rhythm of linear arrangement and combinations of pure colours, emphasized by the light background of the vellum. Although the range of colours is limited, their saturation and choice enhance the expressiveness of the whole palette. The same influence probably accounts for the elements going back to pagan symbolism, and for the motifs borrowed from real life and sometimes depicted with an almost ethnographic accuracy. Another distinctive feature of books produced in Vaspurakan, also determined by their orientation towards the tastes of the common people, was the exten-



sive use of explanatory notes. Apart from clarifying the pictures' meaning, such inscriptions played an important decorative role and became an integral part of the composition and design as a whole.

Vaspurakan manuscripts were lavishly illuminated with khorans and semi-khorans above the Canon tables, with decorative title-pages and marginal ornaments. According to Lydia Dournovo, ornament in Vaspurakan manuscripts was often not merely a decorative supplement to the text, but a pictorial subject in its own right.

Many of the apocryphal and mythological motifs used in the decor of the Canon tables can be traced back to pagan times. These are, for example, the recurring symbols of the Sun and Moon, the images personifying a dying or resurgent deity, etc. Although some of those symbols and images retained their original meaning, the majority were reinterpreted in accordance with new beliefs. The decor of khorans impresses by a beauty and clarity of design, often based on horseshoe-shaped arches filled with geometrical and floral ornament.

But it was in the marginals that the skill and imagination of Vaspurakan artists reached their peak. Marginal decorations ranged from fairly simple floral ornament to elaborate designs incorporating figures of animals and mythological creatures. Such marginals were characterized by a predominantly decorative nature and schematic treatment of images, on the one hand, and by a spontaneity akin to popular art, due to which even canonical religious concepts were presented in a simple and clear way.

The Vaspurakan school of book illustration, compared with other schools in the history of the Armenian miniature and of medieval painting in general, stands out for its pronounced "Oriental" character. This links it with the art of neighbouring countries – Persia, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia and the Arab countries, which were part of one and the same cultural area. But although to a certain extent influenced by the art of these countries, the Vaspurakan miniature succeeded in retaining its unique national character and its own artistic imagery.

**NAKHITCHEVAN.** The art of book illumination in the province of Nakhitchevan and in adjoining regions was closely connected with the traditions of Vaspurakan miniature painting. Two excellent surviving examples are the Gospels illuminated by Simeon in 1304 (Ms. 3722, Pls. 60, 61) and the Gospels illuminated by Markare in 1315 (Ms. 2930, Pls. 62, 63). Both manuscripts show features characteristic of the Nakhitchevan school of book painting.

In the 1304 manuscript, illustrations are reduced to marginal symbols representing traditional Gospel motifs. Thus, a vessel containing myrrh symbolizes The Baptism, a group of shepherds and frolicking lambs stands for The Nativity, and fish in a bowl represent The Last Supper. This characteristic can no doubt be traced back to an ancient tradition reflected in the famous Etchmiadzin Gospels of 989. An important role in the illumination of this ancient manuscript is played by representations of various animals, and by symbols and motifs inherited from pagan imagery.

As Lydia Dournovo puts it in her *Concise History of Old Armenian Painting*, the artist, "while decorating the margins with varied motifs, introduced into his ornaments animals, birds, mythological creatures and human faces, thus enriching the range of subjects and developing the traditional marginal designs . . . His work was not meticulous, but ardent and impulsive, the strokes well-aimed and effective. It was as though the dynamic movements of the artist's brush were spontaneously reflected in the dynamic character of his pictures."<sup>16</sup>

The 1315 Nakhitchevan manuscript contains a large series of miniatures on Gospel subjects, a feature more typical of Vaspurakan book painting than of the Nakhitchevan school. The series opens with a miniature on the Old Testament theme, The Sacrifice of Abraham, and ends with the



scene of The Descent of the Holy Spirit. The miniatures are characterized by somewhat archaic iconography, particularly in the scenes depicting The Nativity, The Resurrection and The Entombment. The laconic versions of the canonical compositions chosen by the painter are endowed with an impressive monumentality of figural representation. The paint is applied in a thick solid layer, and the principal colours are red, velvety-green and umber.

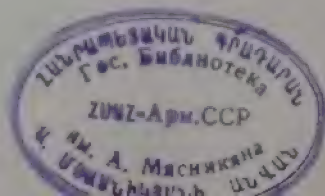
**ARTSAKH, UTIK AND THE BASIN OF LAKE SEVAN.** During the rule of the Zakharids art and writing flourished in many of their vassal principalities in North-East Armenia. One such principality – that of Khatchen – managed to retain a relative independence from the Mongols. It is therefore not surprising that the art of book illustration of Khatchen/Artsakh is now amply represented in the Matenadaran.

A recent study of the Matenadaran manuscripts has made it possible to determine the origin of many of them on the basis of stylistic and iconographic peculiarities and also on the grounds of their similarity with some of the accurately placed and dated manuscripts, for example the 1224 Gospels (Ms. 4823, Pls. 64, 65) from Artsakh. The latter, according to Lydia Dournovo, belongs to a “mixed trend” blending the traditions of aristocratic and folk art. This new trend was connected with the development of urban culture, and one of the main distinctive features of works within this trend was their great expressiveness achieved by a very limited scope of pictorial devices – “a maximum effectiveness at a minimum expense”.<sup>17</sup>

Another work originating from the same province is the manuscript illuminated by Toros before 1261 (Ms. 378, Pls. 66, 67; a number of illustrations in the manuscript are of a later date).

Manuscripts produced in the southern regions of Artsakh and in the Lake Sevan basin present a special iconographic interest and possess considerable aesthetic value. The miniatures in these manuscripts are in many ways different from miniatures representing other schools of book illumination in Armenia. This difference becomes particularly apparent through comparison with the works of the Vaspurakan school. Thus, the Old Testament motif of The Sacrifice of Isaac, which was traditionally an essential part of the Vaspurakan Gospels where it played the role of a pictorial prologue to the text, is altogether absent from the manuscripts of Artsakh/Sevan. The same applies to several other typically Vaspurakan subjects, like Christ in Majesty, The Last Judgement and the Second Coming of Christ, the Miracles of Christ, and, characteristically, to secular motifs. Instead, the miniatures display a predilection for scenes of Christ's childhood (The Nativity, The Presentation in the Temple, The Massacre of the Innocents, Christ Teaching in the Temple), for parables (e.g. The Parable of the Ten Virgins), for the motifs of the original sin (Adam and Eve) and The Betrayal (The Arrest). Instead of the narrative and allegorical scenes of the Old and New Testaments, we have here the motifs of The Genesis, of the original sin and other dramatic events.

These miniatures are also remarkable for some other iconographic peculiarities. Thus, the archangel in The Annunciation scene (Pl. 70) is depicted blowing a pipe while he flies down to Mary. In the scene of The Presentation in the Temple (Pl. 72) Christ, contrary to tradition, is stepping forward to meet St. Simeon. In the miniature representing The Flight into Egypt (Pl. 74) the Virgin with the Child in her arms is walking (and not riding the ass) behind Joseph. In the multifigured scene of The Baptism of Christ the artist showed, in addition to the disciples, a large crowd of people; The Raising of Lazarus (Pl. 73) is likewise crowded with various characters and presents the subject in the form of a succession of episodes. The Last Supper (Pl. 69), due to its unusual composition, must be regarded as a unique monument of medieval art: the apostles sitting at a round table are depicted in such a way that only their heads are visible, while Judas is the only figure presented in full view, apart from the main group.





We should also note that, in Artsakh manuscripts, the miniatures representing *The Ascension* (Pl. 76) and *The Descent of the Holy Spirit* do not include the figure of the Virgin, invariably seen in Vaspurakan miniatures on these subjects. The representation of the Evangelists also deviates from the iconographic tradition of the time – thus, St. John (Pl. 64) does not lean on a staff, as he usually does in Vaspurakan miniatures, and Prochoros, his disciple, is depicted as a young man. One more distinctive feature of Artsakh manuscripts concerns the illumination of the Canon tables, where capitals and bases of the traditional pillars are provided with symbols of the Evangelists.

In certain ways, Artsakh book illustrations are comparable to miniatures from Siunik. The treatment of the Virgin and Child, for example, is reminiscent of works by the Siunik painter *Toros Taronatsi*, while the emphasis laid by Artsakh artists on the figure of St. Joseph in their representations of *The Nativity* is characteristic of another Siunik master, *Momik*.

On the whole, the miniatures of Artsakh and of the Lake Sevan basin were equally influenced by the decorative splendour of the classical art of Siunik and the attractive simplicity of the folk art traditions which flourished in Vaspurakan. But in combining these two different tendencies the Artsakh/Sevan artists succeeded in attaining a surprising stylistic uniformity and harmony. Although inspired by the somewhat laconic manner of the Vaspurakan miniaturists, they endowed their own representations with a wealth of eloquent detail. Some of the Artsakh artists are noted for their highly original treatment of colouring and composition.

The broad, colourful ornamental borders framing the miniatures enhance the impression of compositional integrity; every single detail in the pictures is meticulously finished. According to S. Zhebelev, "all figures and objects in the pictures are strictly coordinated within the limits of one spatial zone. The miniatures are reminiscent of a carpet with a multitude of various designs covering a flat surface, while each of them retains its independence."<sup>18</sup>

The brightly coloured figures depicted against a blank background also resemble parts of the decor. Their static postures, usually with outstretched arms, are all alike. The faces mostly have low foreheads; the hair is neatly divided into separate locks. The attitude in which many figures are depicted, with heads thrown back, brings to mind the works of two Gladsor miniaturists – *Mateos* and *Momik*. The soft colouring of the miniatures is based on shades of silvery-blue, green and violet.

On the whole, in miniatures of Artsakh/Sevan the purely decorative side prevails over the narrative aspect. Particular significance is attached to symbolic accessories in Gospel scenes (e.g. the pipe in *The Annunciation*, the twelve partridges symbolizing the Apostles in *The Presentation in the Temple*, the cross on the table in *The Last Supper* implying the imminent sacrifice of Christ, etc.). These symbolic representations, apart from their contribution to the narrative purport of the pictures, play – in accordance with the Vaspurakan tradition which influenced the Artsakh school – an important role in the illumination of the manuscripts.

Despite the stylistic variety characterizing the different artistic trends and schools of Armenia proper in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they were all inspired by local traditions, by Armenian folk art. Byzantine art which exerted a strong influence on many medieval cultures did not leave here an imprint deep enough to gain ascendancy over the country's own artistic traditions. In Cilicia, however, the Byzantine influence was more pronounced.



## CILICIAN ARMENIA

The cultural life of Armenia, which had to a certain extent slowed down at the turn of the eleventh century, in the course of the next two hundred years underwent a revival not only on Armenian territory proper but also in some regions outside the country, which were then receiving Armenian immigrants and which among other things provided a more favourable political situation for the development of art. Cilicia occupied a prominent position among these regions.

It was a small mountainous country on the north-east coast of the Mediterranean. It must have strongly reminded the exiles of their homeland; besides, the first Armenian settlements had already appeared in Cilicia during the rule of Tigranes II the Great (89–86 B.C.). Towards the end of the eleventh century various regions and cities of Cilicia united into a principality under the Roubenids – a dynasty founded by former vassals of the Armenian king Gagik Bagratuni, who moved to Cilicia where they owned a castle in the Taurus mountains, near the so-called Cilician Gates (a passageway in the mountains). A century later, under Leon II, the principality was transformed into a kingdom which lasted for almost two hundred years – up to the end of the fourteenth century – and for the whole of this time remained one of the most influential states of the Middle East. Its influence was due, to a great extent, to its geographical position: situated out of the way of the Turkish invaders, surrounded by chains of mountains interrupted only by several narrow passages, or “gates”, with the sea-coast completing this natural barrier, Cilicia could enjoy relative safety and peace. On the other hand, this small country stood at the junction of Europe, Asia and Africa, where important trade routes uniting these parts of the world crossed. Besides, Cilicia lay on the route of the Crusaders, and, last but not least, it was a kind of intermediary between Armenia and the neighbouring states. It had to maintain relations with Byzantium, the Seljuk Sultanate, the kingdom of Jerusalem, the Antioch principality of the Crusaders, the Egyptian Sultanate, the Mongols, the Pope of Rome, and the Venetian merchants.

The successful wars fought by the Armenian princes in Cilicia, their flexible diplomacy and far-sighted policy ensured considerable independence to the country and its political and military power. As a result, Cilicia was a region where the expansion of trade, the growth and prosperity of cities, the development of crafts, and, finally, the flourishing of culture and the arts were for a long time unhampered by political hazards.

Unfortunately most of the surviving architectural monuments of Cilicia lie in ruins, and only few of them have been studied by art experts. But despite this one can visualize today the high level of both religious and domestic architecture. Evidence to this effect can be found in the records left by numerous travellers, and in research work by historians of architecture. Fortresses and feudal castles which provided maximum convenience to their inhabitants (and which, as some scholars believe, had an influence – via the Crusaders – upon Western European fortifications), monasteries and churches, caravanserais and baths, schools and hospitals, bridges, aqueducts and canals were built in abundance in that small country which, within a short historical interval, became a highly developed and prosperous state. Ships from many different countries called at its well-protected ports; its mountain passage-ways served as gates for numerous caravans carrying precious Oriental goods; its beautiful cities surrounded by several lines of fortifications throbbed with life and activity, and trade and crafts flourished there freely.

The city of Sia, the capital of Cilicia, enjoyed a fame that reached far beyond the country. It was admired for its impregnable fortress, for its magnificent royal palace whose walls were decorated with reliefs and whose interiors were lavishly adorned with mosaics, gilt and marble, for its rich



library and beautiful gardens, and, finally, for its numerous churches, its school, public baths and hospital. Monasteries, which had always played an important role in Armenian cultural and artistic life, also prospered in Cilicia. The new monastery buildings and churches were decorated with frescoes; monastic libraries and scriptoria in Cilicia, as in Armenia proper, produced illuminated manuscripts.

While our knowledge of Cilician architecture, monumental painting and minor arts remains somewhat fragmentary, we have a fairly clear notion of the evolution of Cilician miniature painting, which is well represented in the Matenadaran collection.

The art of book painting in Cilicia goes back to the eleventh-century miniature art of Armenia proper. The first Armenian settlers in Cilicia did not break off links with their native land, regarding – with good reason – the new kingdom as a political successor to the state of Armenia (this attitude was reflected in the legend concerning the origin of the Roubenids, according to which the latter descended from an old Armenian royal dynasty).

Colophons attached to some of Cilician manuscripts contain information about older manuscripts, brought to Cilicia from Armenia and valued greatly by Armenian immigrants. It was only natural that they should become both a model and an inspiration for the Cilician artists. Their influence is particularly apparent in twelfth-century Cilician manuscripts which developed the traditions of old Armenian book painting. The miniatures and ornamentation in the latter manuscripts are characterized by a monumental austerity of drawing, by large-scale figures, by saturated colours and by a restrained colour range.

Although the Cilician miniature retained many features of traditional Armenian art and thus remained closely linked with its artistic sources, it could not escape the influence of the factors which determined the political situation and the economic and cultural life of the new kingdom. These factors left an imprint both on the outlook of the artists and on the character of their works, which, although basically of the same origin as works by contemporary miniaturists of Armenia proper, were in many ways different. Manuscript illumination developed according to new principles with regard to both the general arrangement of decorative elements and the style itself.

First, manuscripts produced in Cilicia became smaller in size and less official-looking. While Armenian scriptoria in the tenth and eleventh centuries produced huge volumes, to be kept on pulpits and in church vestries, the Cilician manuscripts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were as a rule comparatively small and therefore could be easily held in one's hands. Second, the general design of manuscript books became more imaginative and elaborate. The early Cilician manuscripts (twelfth or early thirteenth century) were usually decorated only with khorans and portraits of the Evangelists, but from the middle of the thirteenth century onwards a new tendency manifested itself in the growing thematic variety of illustrations. In addition to the canonical Gospel subjects, Cilician artists depicted various secondary scenes. Another distinctive feature concerns the placing of historiated miniatures within the book: they either occupy separate pages or are incorporated into the text, but in both cases they are strictly correlated with the corresponding passages in the text, whereas in the manuscripts of Armenia proper the pictorial section usually preceded the text. Finally, in the thirteenth century the Gospels gradually ceased to be the only type of illuminated manuscript in Armenia, and the range of illuminated books widened to include the Bible, the Psalter and Lectionaries.

The style of the illustrations acquired an increasingly more refined and decorative character, becoming, in fact, better adapted to the genre of miniature painting. In contrast to eleventh-century Armenian miniatures which, with their large-scale figures, bold brushwork and restrained colouring, produce the effect of diminutive frescoes, thirteenth-century Cilician works belong entirely to



the sphere of book painting intended for a close and unhurried examination, of a kind that would enable one to appreciate the elegance of smoothly flowing lines, the elaborate ornamentation and the exquisite colour combinations of deep blue, bright red, and different shades of violet with delicate pink, light green, light blue and gold.

By a peculiar whim of fate, most of the surviving Cilician manuscripts belong to the so-called "aristocratic circle" comprising books commissioned by the royal court, by the patriarch or by rich and influential barons. Such manuscripts were produced in large scriptoria by professional artists who had had a good training and who, besides, had at their disposal high-quality vellum and parchment, expensive pigments and gold. This does not mean, however, that in Cilicia, in contrast to Armenia proper, only the upper classes had access to illuminated manuscripts. It is quite probable that these more precious manuscripts were preserved with the utmost care and were the first to be rescued by the Cilicians who, at the fall of the kingdom, were obliged to leave the country. And, consequently, it was these same manuscripts which were donated later by the refugees to churches and libraries in Armenia and other countries.

Despite the overall stylistic uniformity of Cilician miniature painting, we can distinguish several schools which, although closely interrelated, possess certain features typical of this or that art centre. The most prominent centres of art and written culture, which determined to a great extent the principal stages in the development of Cilician book painting, were the monasteries – Hromkla (a fortress on the Euphrates which served as the residence of the Catholicos, head of the Armenian Church); Drazark, Akner and Grner, situated near the city of Sis and associated with the royal family; and, finally, Skevra which belonged to the domain of the Oshinids, the most influential and enlightened of all Cilician princely houses.

The flourishing of culture centres, apart from political and social factors, was also determined by the support given them by patrons, whether clericals or laymen, who liked to surround themselves with talented artists, providing them with all things necessary for work. The most famous among such patrons were Nerses the Graceful, Nerses of Lambron (Nerses Lambronatsi), the Catholicos Constantin I, the Archbishop Hovhannes and others.

Cilician book painting reached its peak between 1250 and 1290. Its magnificent achievements were rooted in the preceding development of miniature art over one and a half centuries. The distinctive style of Cilician miniature began to take shape towards the end of the twelfth century; it is only natural, therefore, that its characteristic traits are discernible in works dating from the beginning and first half of the thirteenth century.

It so happens that the first half of that century is represented in the Matenadaran by a comparatively small number of manuscripts, very few of which are of real interest. Among the latter is the 1237 Gospels (Ms. 7700, Pl. 79), commissioned in Sis by Prince Constantin of the Oshinid dynasty. Prince Constantin was appointed regent at the death of King Leon II (1219), whose only heiress was his little daughter Zabel. In 1226, Constantin forced the young princess to marry his son Hetoum, who thus became the legitimate king of the country and founded a new dynasty.

This version of the Gospels is not fully characteristic of the specifically Cilician style of miniature painting, a style which was to develop in the second half of the century. The colouring of the khorans, portraits of the Evangelists and first pages of the Gospels is markedly different from the rich and vivid colouring typical of the later Cilician book painting. The colours are soft, and their range is rather limited: it consists mainly of delicate shades of green, light blue, pale yellow and lilac touched with gold. The proportions of the khorans lack harmony, and the ornamentation is not so elaborate and refined as it was to become some twenty years later: it lacks the variety and richness of motif which give to Cilician manuscripts of the mature period their unique decorativeness. The



treatment of birds whose figures frame the Canon tables is still rather conventional as compared with the astonishing realism of later representations.

The mature Cilician style is represented in the *Matenadaran* by two manuscripts, of 1249 (Ms. 7690) and 1251 (Ms. 3033, Pls. 80–83). Both were produced at the Hromkla monastery. Although illumination in these volumes is still confined to portraits of the Evangelists, to first pages and, in the case of the 1251 Gospels, to Canon tables,<sup>19</sup> its stylistic features reflect the fully developed artistic principles of the Cilician school. Thus, the treatment of the figures and faces of the Evangelists betrays an attempt to render the effect of volume; the folds of the draperies delineate the shape of the body, and the proportions and postures of the figures are almost natural. The rich colouring is based on saturated blue, green and red hues set off by gold, and the ornament is minutely elaborated.

The 1249 Gospels was illuminated by Kirakos, one of the leading Hromkla masters, whose work is represented in the *Matenadaran* by several manuscripts dating from the 1240s. Kirakos was an immediate predecessor, an older contemporary and, in all probability, the teacher of one of the greatest Armenian artists – Toros Roslin.

The two manuscripts from the Hromkla monastery are characterized by the iconographic features (relating to the decor of the Canon tables and to the representation of the Evangelists) and the general stylistic traits typical of the Golden Age of the Hromkla school (1250s and 1260s).

On the other hand, the decor of the Canon tables is still somewhat heavy in its proportions; the figures of birds decorating the khorans, although already more vivid and realistic than their earlier counterparts, still lack the free artistry and exquisite virtuosity which give a unique character to Cilician miniature art in the middle and second half of the thirteenth century.

The Golden Age is also represented by another Hromkla manuscript – the Gospels (Ms. 8321, Pls. 87–89) commissioned by the Catholicos Constantin I as a gift for his godson, Prince Leon, heir to the throne and the future King Leon III. Besides the traditional khorans, the manuscript includes a portrait of the Prince (Pl. 89). This is one of the earliest surviving examples of Cilician portrait painting. In accordance with the medieval tradition, the representation is devoid of any individual portrait characteristics. The artist was apparently perplexed by the unusual task, and his considerable gift as a miniature painter could reveal itself to the full only in the treatment of the Prince's magnificent garments and in the rich and varied colouring. Later, portraits of the person who commissioned the book or of its owner were to become a customary feature of Cilician illuminated manuscripts.

The middle of the thirteenth century marks the beginning of new creative searches by the Cilician miniature painters whose achievements at this time to a certain extent anticipate the tendencies developed by Byzantine art during the Palaeologan period. Cilician artists of this period sought to break the constraints of medieval canons, to impart spatial depth to their pictures and to achieve volume and perspective in figural representation. The general tendency towards a realistic depiction of traditional scenes, which was first manifested in the Gospels of 1249 and 1251, was fully developed by Toros Roslin. Unfortunately, just as with the majority of painters of this time, we know very little about Roslin's life. According to the colophons of his manuscripts, he worked at Hromkla between 1250 and 1270 and was evidently the chief artist of the Patriarch's scriptorium. He must have been quite a celebrity, for he received commissions from the capital – from members of the royal family and courtiers. His popularity was undoubtedly also due to the patronage of the Catholicos Constantin I, one of the most educated people in Cilicia.

The seven surviving manuscripts illuminated by Toros Roslin were produced at Hromkla between 1256 and 1268. In addition, there are also several illuminated manuscripts in the *Matenadaran*.



ran which, although not signed, are attributed to Roslin on the basis of their stylistic affinity with his signed works.

One of the most remarkable manuscripts in the Matenadaran collection signed by Roslin is the so-called Malatian Gospels (after the town of Malatia) of 1268 (Ms. 10675, Pls. 90–103). It is one of the last and probably the best of Roslin's works. It was commissioned by the Catholicos Constantin I as a gift for Prince Hetoum, son of Leon III. Apart from decorated khorans, first pages of the Gospels, portraits of the Evangelists and a great number of marginals (probably painted by an assistant), the manuscript contains thirteen historiated miniatures on Gospel subjects; originally there were more of these. In his miniatures the artist combines traditional iconography with spontaneous real-life impressions. As a result his composition becomes less rigid, and the proportions of the figures more harmonious and elegant. Body shape is clearly delineated under the folds of the robes, and poses and gestures are no longer unnatural or static.

This new tendency towards a more realistic representation also applies to the spatial arrangement of the scenes: the figures, buildings and elements of landscape are arranged in several consecutive visual planes, in which the artist employed the devices of parallel and inverted perspective. Another device which resulted in producing a spatial effect and which was apparently favoured by Roslin consisted in "screening" the middle-distance figures by the figures in the foreground, so that only parts of the more remote figures showed behind the ones in front. This device is used in the scenes of The Descent into Limbo (The Harrowing of Hell), The Entry into Jerusalem (Pl. 99), The Nativity (Pl. 101) and The Crucifixion (Pl. 102). The colouring of Roslin's miniatures is less schematic and conventional by comparison to that of his predecessors. The subtle interplay of shades enables him to achieve the impression of volume and to skilfully model the faces. All these new tendencies in the mode of expression were the natural result of worldly concepts penetrating into Cilician art at the time. Although Roslin was still bound by medieval canons, he managed to expand the limits they imposed on his art, which, as a consequence, while retaining the traditional solemnity, was more realistic and true to life than the art of his predecessors or even contemporaries.

The conceptual novelty and creative ingenuity of Roslin's art give every reason to regard him as a great master. The colouring of his miniatures is bright and at the same time noble and harmonious. The artist's favourite combination is that of blue and gold with an occasional delicate stroke of red; he also uses pale lilac and velvety-green shades, although far less often than the artists who worked in the 1270s and 1280s.

The elegant proportions of the figures, the strictly balanced composition, the ingenuity and variety of ornamentation, the impeccable taste and moderation in everything – in the colouring, decoration and choice of motifs inspired by real life – betray a genuinely classical master of a calibre which throughout the history of art is only found at the highest peaks of its development.

The art of Toros Roslin is both serene and magnificent; it combines quiet joyfulness with light melancholy. His aesthetic ideal depends on the spiritual beauty of his figures, rather than on the regularity of their features. His Christ has nothing of the abstract austerity of canonical representations: it is not a transcendental image, but a human being in whom sublimity is combined with gentleness, and nobility with inner strength and manly reserve – traits which undoubtedly reflect the spiritual world of the artist himself.

One of the unsigned manuscripts in the Matenadaran which can be attributed to Toros Roslin is the 1266 Gospels (Ms. 5458, Pls. 84–86). This manuscript, of which only 38 folios have survived, was commissioned by King Hetoum I and produced at the monastery of Hromkla. It must have been lavishly decorated, containing the complete set of illustrations adopted at Hromkla for illuminating the Gospels in the 1280s (Canon tables, dedication pages and historiated miniatures). Un-



fortunately only two miniatures have been preserved. But the beauty of the calligraphy in the surviving fragments of the manuscript, the subtle interplay of black and gold lettering, the decorative-ness of the initials and marginals, the taste with which the latter are arranged on the page, and, above all, the astonishing skill and inspiration evident in the two miniatures (with the representation of Christ in the margins) seem to prove beyond doubt that the manuscript was one of the greatest achievements of Cilician book painting.

The new tendencies which found their reflection in the art of Toros Roslin were developed by his contemporaries, artists working in various cultural and religious centres of Cilicia, and producing miniatures distinguished from the work of the Hromkla school by a marked interest in spatial arrangement. This interest manifested itself in the prominence given to a complex architectural background against which the buildings were presented from an angle emphasizing recession into depth.

Manuscripts of this group do not lend themselves to accurate attribution and are difficult to place, for only a few of them have the usual colophons. But in all probability they come from the monastery of Skevra or from the smaller monasteries situated near the capital, Sis. The most remarkable examples in the Matenadaran are the Gospels which for lack of colophon can be only roughly dated to the 1270s (Ms. 7648, Pls. 110, 111), the Bible of 1270 (Ms. 345, Pl. 104) commissioned by Archbishop Hovhannes and probably produced in Grner, and the Gospels (Ms. 7644, Pls. 105–109) owned by an outstanding public figure, the Constable of Cilicia, historian and legislator Smbat, brother of King Hetoum I. The latter manuscript, although it bears the name of its owner, contains no indications of the time and place of its creation. However, it can be roughly dated to between 1260 and 1276 (the year of Smbat's death). The khorans decorating the Canon tables in the manuscript are remarkable for their ornamental splendour and bright colouring. The purity of forms, clarity of composition and harmony of the pictorial devices give them a serene nobility and reserve which suggest that the artist was a contemporary of Toros Roslin.

The art of Toros Roslin and of artists belonging to the same generation represented the classical period in the development of Cilician book illumination. The ensuing period which began some ten or fifteen years after the last known work by Roslin was marked by considerable changes in aesthetic principles, caused by changes in political and social life. The two last decades of the thirteenth century were also the end of the Golden Age of Cilicia, followed by a slow but steady decline. The increasingly frequent raids by the Egyptian Mamelukes (who in 1292 captured and plundered the monastery of Hromkla) created an atmosphere of alarm and apprehension in the country, which could not but tell on the art of this period. Although essentially based on the traditions of Toros Roslin and his contemporaries, it has at the same time quite distinct features of its own. Following Roslin, the artists of the 1280s introduce many details prompted by real life into canonical schemes; like their great predecessor, they seek to convey the feelings of their characters. But they "out-Roslin Roslin", as it were, in their pursuit of the true-to-life, and sometimes, in fact, distort the noble and lofty ideal created by him. The faces in the miniatures of this period are often crude, the figures elongated to the point of deformity, particularly if compared with the almost Hellenistic proportions of Toros Roslin's figures. The serene equanimity and reticence characteristic of Roslin's art and of that of his immediate predecessors are replaced by dramatic intensity and dynamism, which permeate the compositions of the new school. The scenes become overcrowded with details and figures which are all but lost in the maze of forms. While in the case of Roslin's characters the faces, postures and movements conveyed genuine, strong but restrained feelings, in the miniatures of the late thirteenth century the emotions of the characters are deliberately emphasized almost to the point of affectation. This "Baroque-like" period of the Cilician miniature is represented in the Matenadaran by a group of first-class manuscripts produced in the 1280s. Although for most of them we have no



evidence of origin or authorship, comparison with some well-authenticated manuscripts of the same period allows to relate them to the monasteries around the city of Sis.

The most lavishly illuminated manuscript of this period – and also perhaps of the entire collection of surviving Armenian book miniatures – is the *Lectionary of 1286* (Ms. 979, Pls. 112–125), commissioned by Prince Hetoum (the future King Hetoum II, owner of the *Malatian Gospels* illuminated by Toros Roslin). Almost every single one of its folios, numbering over four hundred, contains elements of decoration. These include full-page miniatures, border scenes, isolated figures or ornamented symbols on the margins, and decorative initials with historiated, zoomorphic or geometrical motifs. In addition to the fact that it was a commission from the royal family, the nature of the liturgical book itself accounts for its splendour. The *Lectionaries* were always luxuriously decorated, and besides gave an opportunity to represent a wide range of subjects, from Old and New Testament motifs and scenes connected with various saints and martyrs, to allegories and even episodes from the history of Christian Church.

It is likely that the *Lectionary of 1286* was illuminated by several different artists working at one and the same scriptorium under the supervision of some eminent master. They must have been typical representatives of this particular period in the history of art, and their work reflects all the new tendencies which appeared in Cilician painting towards the end of the thirteenth century.

The miniatures in the *Lectionary* are characterized by dynamism, nervous expressiveness and a dramatic quality. All these features are manifested both in the general compositional arrangement and in individual elements of the pictures, for instance in the forms of the silhouettes and in the particular refinement of rich and vivid colours.

The above-mentioned tendency to emphasize emotion through gestures and movements revealing the inner state of the characters is clearly seen in the representations of the Virgin or of St John in *The Descent from the Cross* (Pl. 123).

Similar emotional intensity and nervous anxiety characterize another miniature in the *Lectionary* – *The Holy Women at the Sepulchre* (Pl. 124). The curving nervous contours of the silhouettes which seem hardly able to control the inner tension of the forms create an atmosphere of uneasiness and dramatism. In the miniature showing Christ with His Disciples (Pl. 122) the artist succeeds in conveying the solemnity and concentration proper to the scene. The gestures of the Apostles are lively and natural, their figures appear to be painted from life. The same verisimilitude of gesture and facial expression is typical of the figures in many other scenes in the manuscript, among them the scene of *The Crossing of the Red Sea*. On the other hand, the general character of the latter is more conventional and schematic due to the treatment of the sea which is presented as a deliberately flat serpentine ornament. The heads of the drowning Egyptians showing above the surface of the sea also give the impression of being purely decorative elements. Such treatment betrays a typically Oriental taste for ornamental expressiveness.

The extremely rich illumination of the *Lectionary* strikes one by its variety of design, and by the boldness and vividness of its fantasy. Here, perhaps more than in any other Cilician manuscript, the artists reveal their familiarity with the art of other nations. This should not be taken to mean that they mechanically reproduced certain elements alien to their art, but rather that they purposefully widened the ornamental range of the decor by borrowing motifs from different foreign sources. As a consequence, traditional Armenian designs co-exist in the manuscript with ornamental motifs typical of the Middle and Far East. Thus, Chinese lions with manes reminiscent of tongues of flame encircle a medallion containing a bust portrait of Emmanuel in one of the title-pages (Pl. 116); sea-waves swirling up in tight spirals in the scene of *Jonah Cast into the Sea* (Pl. 125) are evocative of Chinese prints and drawings; the dragons in the headpiece and margin of another title-page



(Pl. 119) are also derived from Far East symbols, although in the latter case, between the two animals in the marginal design there appears another symbolical image – of a three-faced creature evoking associations with antique art. The treatment of the nude figure – Nebuchadnezzar's idol (Pl. 121) – also denotes a certain knowledge of antique sculpture. Other borrowings in the decor of the Lectionary come from Arabian and Persian art (particularly those in the ornamentation of the title-pages). Furthermore, Western European styles, particularly those typical of the Crusaders' usual attire, are easily recognizable in the costumes of some characters.

Among the most frequent sources of such borrowings were various art objects manufactured by foreign craftsmen and brought to Cilicia by merchants and visitors from many countries. These gradually became a habitual feature of Cilician urban life, so rather than regarding them as exotic rarities, the artists just turned to them in their pursuit of novelty and variety of design. The range of artistic items imported into or taken through Cilicia was rather wide. It comprised Arabian pottery and metalwork, Chinese porcelain, enamels, silks and bronzes, Persian rugs and textiles, etc.

As for the borrowings from the world of antiquity, these probably had local origins. It is known that during the ancient period Tarsus – one of the oldest Cilician cities and the traditional coronation place of Cilician kings from the twelfth to the fourteenth century – was among the most prominent centres of Hellenistic culture. At the end of the thirteenth century there were still some ruins of ancient temples, theatres and aqueducts to be seen. We have already mentioned that mid-thirteenth-century Cilician artists were probably familiar with examples of classical sculpture, whose realism must have been consonant with their creative pursuits. European art found its way into Cilicia via Venetian and Genoese merchants, via the papal legates and, above all, via the diplomatic missions from neighbouring states conquered and ruled by the Crusaders, many of whose high-ranking barons were related by marriage to the Cilician royal house.

All the different elements borrowed from various sources are not merely brought together in the Lectionary of Hetoum II and other Cilician manuscripts, but are naturally and organically incorporated into the general pattern of decoration so that together they form a unified design.

The group of manuscripts which includes the Lectionary of 1286 (Ms. 979) is represented in the Matenadaran by another example – the Gospels (Ms. 197, Pls. 126–131) written in 1287 at Akner by Bishop Hovhannes, brother of King Hetoum I. Apart from the usual khorans and Gospel scenes, the manuscript contains a representation of the apocryphal scene of The Assumption of St. John the Divine and a Dedication scene with a portrait of the bishop himself. Both miniatures, one representing the owner of the manuscript and the other his patron, St. John the Evangelist, were undoubtedly done in accordance with the owner's wish.<sup>20</sup>

The illustrator of this manuscript, like the artist who decorated the 1286 Lectionary, endows his Gospel scenes with features from real life. Thus, The Entry into Jerusalem (Pl. 127) is enlivened by a number of convincingly realistic details. Such are, for instance, a worried father reasoning with his son who has climbed a tree; a mother pressing her child to her knee in a protective gesture; a crowd of people overcome by curiosity; the subtle variations in the facial expressions and movements of the Apostles; and the ass nibbling grass. The illusion of reality and the truth of the scene are so great that it seems almost certain that in depicting it the artist relied upon his own experience and was inspired by a recollection of a similar event in real life, for example, by the ceremonial entry of the King into Sis.

The Matenadaran collection includes another Gospel manuscript dating from approximately the same period (Ms. 9422, Pls. 132–139). Its original colophon is unfortunately lost, but a later, fourteenth-century one survives and presents a dramatic record of the various mishaps that befell the book in the monastery of St. John the Forerunner in the town of Mush (Western Armenia).



In the middle of the fourteenth century the monks had to hide their most valuable manuscripts, including the Gospels in question, to save them from the invaders. When, many years later, the manuscripts were removed from their secret hiding-place, it turned out that many of them "had rotten away and were impossible to read". The monks buried the damaged books, but fortunately this became known to a certain deacon, Simeon, who gave orders to have them dug up and hired an expert to restore them. After restoration the books were returned to the monastery. Surprisingly enough, the Cilician Gospels which was among those manuscripts still retains a remarkable freshness of paint and much of the brilliancy of its rich iridescent colours. The hazards of history did not in the least impair the superb artistic quality of the miniatures, whose poetic lyricism places them among the best examples of Armenian miniature painting.

The khorans of the Canon tables, light and elegant in their proportions, are filled with geometric and floral ornaments, both intricate and refined, as well as with figures of birds, animals and monsters, and with hunting scenes and scenes of fighting animals (Pls. 132–135). The lacelike tracery of the ornamentation, the exquisite colouring combining deep blue, violet, red and green, and the skilful use of gold give splendour and brilliancy to the khorans.

The supple and elegant figures introduced into the intricate ornamental designs are treated with a realism surprising in a medieval painting, and with an easy freedom which makes one admire the skill and imagination of the unknown Cilician artist who illuminated the manuscript.

The illumination of the khorans in both Armenia proper and Cilicia was usually determined by the traditional precepts found in the treatises by Armenian theologians. The earliest of such symbolic interpretations is attributed to an eighth-century author, Stepanos of Siunik; more detailed and comprehensive precepts were worked out in the twelfth century by the Catholicos Nerses IV the Graceful. He dwelt upon each of the ten Canons in turn, specifying what trees or birds should decorate them and what colours were appropriate in each particular case, every element of the decor having a symbolic significance. This text must have been familiar to Cilician artists, for whom it was originally meant. But it is quite obvious that the artists did not always follow its precepts verbatim: they could disregard the traditional meaning of this or that motif, and often combined and arranged them according to their own fancy, sometimes adding purely decorative elements. Thus, while certain motifs fully preserve their symbolic significance (e.g. birds quenching their thirst at a pool of water personify a thirst for immortality; pomegranates whose sweet seeds are concealed under a thick skin symbolize the kindness of the prophets; the tall palm trees reaching to the skies imply heavenly justice, etc.), none whatsoever is attached to such figures as a monkey- or goat-headed man with a cornucopia or a flower in his hand, to nude dancers, or to horsemen frequently seen in the decor of the Canon tables. The most natural reason for those deviations from canonical symbolism is that the artists were inspired by the life around them, by the circus shows, mysteries, hunts, and above all by their own creative fancy.

Like the Lectionary of 1286, the Gospels may have been a result of team-work by several artists, supervised by an extremely talented master. The latter was undoubtedly responsible for the Canon tables and for such miniatures as *The Annunciation* (Pl. 136) and *The Raising of Lazarus* (Pl. 137). The emotional and poetic vein of the former scene, and the feeling of softness and tenderness which it radiates are mainly accounted for by the colours used: light blue and lilac shades are combined with deep blue and violet on a gold background.

Another outstanding Cilician manuscript in the Matenadaran collection is the Gospels traditionally referred to as the "Gospels by Eight Masters"<sup>21</sup> (Ms. 7651, Pls. 145–150).

The character of its illumination differs from the traditional Armenian book painting, particularly with regard to the arrangement of illustrations and ornaments. There are no full-page minia-



tures; they are incorporated into the text, forming frieze-like bands – a method rarely used by Armenian painters and in this case evidently due to Byzantine influence.<sup>22</sup>

The manuscript was written in the late thirteenth century by the celebrated Cilician calligrapher Avetis who apparently worked in the city of Sis. It was then turned over to a team of painters for illumination, though for some reason or other the work was not completed. The subsequent history of the Gospels is known thanks to a colophon left by its second owner – Stepanos, bishop of Sebastia – who received the book as a gift from King Oshin. The colophon reads: "I, the worthless Stepanos, bishop of the town of Sebastia, a lost shepherd and the poor author [of these notes] set forth to the God-protected country of Cilicia on a pilgrimage to the relics of St. Gregory. There I met with an honourable reception and respect from the Patriarch Constantin and King Oshin. And the devout King Oshin wished to honour me, the worthless one, with a gift, and I, refusing all things vain, expressed the wish to possess a book of Gospels. And on the King's orders I entered the palace treasury where the holy books were kept, and when I saw them my heart rejoiced at this book, which was written in a beautiful cursive hand and adorned with many-coloured pictures, but which was not complete in its illustration, with some pictures merely outlined, and still more entirely blank. And I took the manuscript I did, with great joy, and started to search for a skilful artist, and found a devout clergyman Sargis, called Pidzak, who was experienced in art. And I gave him 1300 drachmae of my righteous earnings, and he undertook to complete the unfinished pictures and decorate them with gilding, which he did with great skill and care, and I, having received the completed manuscript, rejoiced in my heart. And all this came to pass in the year 769 [1320] by the Armenian calendar, at a time of trouble, evil and misfortunes of which I find it unnecessary to write ..."

Each of the eight illuminators of the manuscript possesses a clearly definable manner, so that their respective contributions are easy to identify. Six of the eight masters took part in the original illumination of the Gospels. The artist who worked on the first fascicle of the book stands out among them as the most talented. His miniatures are somewhat larger in size than the rest in the book, the pictorial treatment is characterized by a dramatic intensity and dynamism, the gestures are expressive, and the postures varied and natural. The faces convey the different moods and feelings of the characters: sorrow and suffering, doubt and joy, pride and submission.

The painters who decorated the manuscript with a series of smaller miniatures followed Byzantine antecedents in the figural representation and compositional arrangement of the scenes. The small-scale figures in their miniatures are exquisitely outlined against the clear background of the page. The spaces between the figures are only occasionally filled with details of the setting – rocks, buildings or plants.

The work of this group of miniaturists coincided with the final stage of the Golden Age of Cilician art, which came to an abrupt end in the early fourteenth century. Fourteenth-century Cilician painters abandoned the traditions of the preceding century; their works have very little in common with either the classical art of Toros Roslin or with the dynamic style of the last two decades of the thirteenth century. Both in iconography and in the manner of painting the artists of the new generation relied more upon the traditions of Oriental art.

This drastic change in Cilician book painting coincided with dramatic turning points in the political and social life of the country. Cilicia, weakened as it was by internal strife, could not stand up to the devastating raids by the Egyptian Mamelukes, which inflicted irretrievable damage upon the state and eventually caused its fall at the end of the fourteenth century.

The final stage in the development of Cilician art is best represented in the creative activity of the master mentioned earlier, Sargis Pidzak. He was undoubtedly an outstanding artist, although his manner may seem somewhat cold. He was immune to innovations introduced by Roslin and his



followers: his scenes contain no architectural or landscape elements; the figures are represented against a gold background adorned with ornamental motifs. The treatment of figures, although not utterly devoid of optical effect, still bears no evidence of a deliberate attempt to render volume, spatial depth or natural movement. The gestures are schematic and unexpressive, and in the rendering of faces the artist uses outline drawing side by side with the more advanced technique of colour modelling. The contours of his figures lack volume and plasticity, and the forms acquire a certain rigidity; his palette does not include the traditional lilac, violet and pale green hues and is mainly based on the combination of bright red with blue and greyish-brown, with an ample use of gold.

Despite all these apparent limitations and despite his having broken away from the local traditions, Sargis Pidzak remains a remarkable and extremely competent artist. His miniatures are distinguished by a unique decorativeness, which betrays the influence of Eastern Christian art. This probably is the reason for Pidzak's popularity during the later stage of the development of Armenian book painting. An extremely prolific master (32 of his manuscripts survive),<sup>23</sup> Sargis Pidzak was held in great esteem by Vaspurakan miniaturists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who were undoubtedly attracted by the decorativeness of his works and by his artistic manner, which held a stronger appeal for folk artists than the refined and elaborate style of classical Cilician art of the thirteenth century. His work is illustrated in this edition by two miniatures from the 1336 Gospels (Ms. 5786, Pls. 151, 152).

Sargis Pidzak was the last prominent figure in Cilician book painting. In 1375 Sis, the capital of Cilicia, fell to the armies of the Sultan of Egypt, which meant the end of Cilician Armenia and, consequently, the end of Cilician Armenian culture.

Cilician book painting, particularly that of the thirteenth century, made a magnificent contribution both to Armenian art and to medieval art in general. The significance of the Cilician miniature in terms of its international impact lies in the great artistic skill attained and perfected by several successive generations of Cilician masters, and in the highly original stylistic tendencies which in many ways anticipated Byzantine art of the Palaeologan period and made the Cilician school one of the most advanced schools in the art of Eastern Christendom during the thirteenth century.



## THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA

Among the numerous surviving manuscripts in the Matenadaran collection there are quite a few which were produced outside Armenia by refugees who were forced to leave their homeland at one time or another in search of safety and peace. Armenian settlements or colonies appeared in Greece, Italy, Russia, Persia, Roumania, Poland, Bulgaria, India, Egypt and other countries. During certain historical periods these colonies assumed a leading role in the development of Armenian art and culture, which, although always faithful to national traditions, was at the same time in constant interaction with its new surroundings.

One of the largest Armenian settlements was in the Crimea. It reached the peak of its prosperity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the Crimea was one of the principal centres of international trade, and its main city, Capha (now Theodosia), an important sea-port. At that time the Crimea was a peculiar conglomeration of various nationalities and national cultures. By the end of the fourteenth century Armenians made up two thirds of the population of Capha. Numerous architectural monuments in the Crimea, many of which have survived to this day, are of Armenian origin. Apart from their contribution to architecture and building technique, Armenian settlers in the Crimea also left their mark on the art of book painting. Armenian scriptoria in the Crimea produced illuminated manuscripts as they did in Armenia proper. Today the Matenadaran collection contains over three hundred manuscripts produced in the Crimea.

The art of the Armenian settlers in the Crimea absorbed the traditions of various national schools and trends, among which the most influential were those represented by the Greek and Italian colonists.

The art of book painting in the Crimea, as was the case with all the other arts, was at first rather eclectic, but in the course of time it managed to acquire certain specific features. One such feature was the combination of two essentially different methods, graphic and painterly, within one manuscript, the full-colour historiated miniatures being accompanied by purely graphic ornaments done in one or two colours with only some light tinting. The saturated colours are applied in thick layers; the principal combinations are of quiet dark-blue and violet, while red, yellow and gold are only occasionally used. These traits are clearly distinguished in the art of Avetis, Arakel, Kirakos, Stepanos and other masters, with their impasto technique, bold sweeping brushwork, a tendency towards generalization of forms, and a minute and detailed treatment of figures and faces.

Some of the Crimean/Armenian manuscripts are characterized by a style typical of Byzantine miniature painting of the Palaeologan period, known as the "Byzantine Renaissance". Such is the 1332 Gospels (Ms. 7664, Pls. 153, 154) produced in the town of Surkhat (now called Stary Krym).<sup>24</sup> The miniatures in the manuscript are by two different artists, one of whom was probably the scribe Grigor Sukiasants. The treatment of miniatures is bold and unrestrained, betraying the artists' attempt to render space and volume; the figures are presented in varied and dynamic postures, and the extraordinary liveliness and animation of certain scenes (e.g. Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple, The Passion of Christ and episodes from the life of St. John) produce an effect reminiscent of genre painting. The elongated oval faces of the characters, the delicate shading, the colouring based on combinations of pale, soft hues, the greenish shadows – these features of the Crimean school are more typical of Byzantine or Southern Slav art of the early fourteenth century than of Armenian miniatures of that time. The blank background against which the scenes are represented gives the miniatures a particular vividness and distinctness of outline; and each picture produces the impression of a diminutive easel painting.



Towards the end of the fourteenth century, when Cilician Armenia was nearing its fall (1375) and when many Cilicians fled the country and settled, among other places, in the Crimea, certain traits of Cilician art began to penetrate into the Crimean/Armenian school of book painting. The samples of Cilician art which had been brought over by the refugees from Cilicia included the Gospels of Constable Smbat (Ms. 7644), the "Gospels by Eight Masters" (Ms. 7651), a manuscript illuminated by Sargis Pidzak, and several other books.

It is of interest that the Crimean artists, when studying Cilician manuscripts, added some miniatures of their own. Thus, the Gospels of Smbat were supplied with a *menological* cycle (Pls. 161, 162), while another Cilician Gospel manuscript (Ms. 7690) was provided with portraits of the Evangelists.

Apart from the Cilician influence, the Crimean miniature shows some influence of contemporary Italian art; it is felt, for instance, in the work of a late fourteenth-century painter, Hovhannes, whose miniatures betray an attempt to apply the more advanced *chiaroscuro* method to the rendering of space and volume, instead of the conventional technique based on the contrast of colours.

Only a small number of manuscripts produced or illustrated by Armenian masters in Italy have survived, and those that have found their way into the Matenadaran collection represent different periods and different art centres. The earliest Armenian settlements appeared in Italy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, following an agreement between Cilician and Italian traders which authorized Cilician merchants to open their offices and shops in Italy, and vice versa. Italy became a second homeland for many refugees from Armenia proper who often arrived there via Cilicia. Like everywhere else, Armenian settlers in Italy built houses and churches, and, along with other objects of art and culture, produced illuminated manuscripts.

The earliest and the most remarkable of these manuscripts is a lavishly illuminated fragment of the Bible (Ms. 2705, Pls. 158, 159) which was produced in Bologna, apparently in the late thirteenth century. Judging by the style of the miniatures, they are by an artist who studied under a Byzantine master – one of those who, at the fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders in 1204, emigrated to different countries. For almost a century, they played a considerable role in the artistic life of Italy.

The miniatures in the Bologna Bible are distinguished by perfect artistic taste, by a soft and varied colouring, by a delicate modelling of forms, and, finally, by a skilful balance of composition. In so far as the choice of subjects is concerned, the artist was apparently influenced by Western European art, which can account for some motifs hitherto unknown to Armenian miniature – as, for example, the Apocalypse cycle (Pl. 158).

The miniatures in the fourteenth-century Perugia Gospel (Ms. 7628, Pl. 164) owe much to Latin illuminated manuscripts. Thus, portraits of the Evangelists form the headpieces of the corresponding Gospels, and the initials are painted over an even-coloured background. At the same time the miniatures possess certain characteristics of Armenian painting which are apparent in the typical stylization of forms and in the predominance of the linear approach to the treatment of details.

From the fifteenth century onwards more and more Armenians were converted to Catholicism, but in spite of this they continued to maintain their national identity. Indeed, it was during this period that many Armenian communities in Italy increased their cultural activities. Characteristically, the first Armenian printed book appeared in Venice (1512). Two centuries later, an Armenian monastery was founded on one of the islands near Venice, which received the status of a congregation. This congregation, with its rich library, repository of manuscripts, museum and printing-house, still exists today as a residue of Armenian culture on Italian soil.

Quite a few illuminated manuscripts were produced by Armenian settlers in Iran, particularly in those regions which had previously formed part of the Armenian Kingdom. Miniature painters



who worked there were of necessity under a strong influence of Persian art. Mkhitar Anetsi, a fourteenth-century calligrapher and miniaturist, is a case in point.

As for Armenian colonies in other countries, the art of book painting which developed there later depended to a large extent on the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts produced in Armenian colonies abroad and in Armenia proper. They served as models for many generations of miniaturists. Illustrations from these manuscripts were copied and emulated, and even the copies themselves were sometimes used as models for imitation. Nowadays these manuscripts still impress us by their superb artistic quality, by the variety of subjects, by the splendour of ornamentation and, above all, by a surprising brilliancy of colour which has withstood the ravages of time.

Armenian book painting of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with its numerous trends and schools, reflected the stormy epoch of war, political controversy and social conflict.

The end of the historical Middle Ages marked the final decline of medieval miniature art which despite occasional recessions had flourished in Armenia up to the turn of the fourteenth century. Its decline was primarily caused by the unfavourable historical conditions, but it was also predetermined by the natural development of art and culture: with the invention of printing, illumination ceded its place to graphic art, while fresco and book painting were gradually overshadowed by easel painting.

Nevertheless, the history of world art proves that true artistic values never disappear without a trace. The Armenian miniature has entered the world art treasury as one of its most precious gems whose facets reflect the high aesthetic ideals of the epoch and their brilliant realization by great masters.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> V. Briusov, *Armenian Poetry* (in Russian), Yerevan, 1966, p. 27.
- <sup>2</sup> Rectangular stone slabs of various sizes with carved ornamental crosses. *Khatchkars* were erected both as isolated monuments and as gravestones and memorials in churchyards and monasteries; sometimes they were also built into the walls of churches.
- <sup>3</sup> L. Khatchikian, "Gladzor University and Graduation Speeches of Its Students", *Papers of Yerevan University* (in Armenian), XXIII, Yerevan, 1946.
- <sup>4</sup> L. Dournovo, *Essays on Pictorial Art in Medieval Armenia* (in Russian), Moscow, 1979, p. 244.
- <sup>5</sup> A. Yakobson, "Artistic Connections of Muscovite Russia with Transcaucasia and the Middle East in the Sixteenth Century", in: *Relics of the Moscow Kremlin* (in Russian), Moscow, 1971.
- <sup>6</sup> Marginal miniatures, or marginals, were usually placed at the beginning of each chapter; sometimes they contained an ornamental chapter number.
- <sup>7</sup> An architectural term denoting the interior of a building with a vaulted ceiling. The term was borrowed for denoting the arch-shaped design traditionally used in the illumination of the Canon tables. The latter were compiled in the fourth century by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, to correlate with the numbered chapters of the four Gospels.
- <sup>8</sup> S. Der Nersessian, "An Armenian Lectionary of the Fourteenth Century", *Byzantine and Armenian Studies*, Louvain, 1973, p. 653; B. Narkiss, *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem, 1979, p. 78.
- <sup>9</sup> A note, usually placed at the end of a book, giving details of its origin, viz. the names of the scribe, the illuminator, the person who commissioned the manuscript, the place and date of production. Successive owners of the book often added colophons of their own.
- <sup>10</sup> L. Khatchikian, *Colophons in Fourteenth-century Armenian Manuscripts* (in Armenian), Yerevan, 1950, p. 305.
- <sup>11</sup> L. Dournovo, *A Concise History of Old Armenian Painting* (in Russian), Yerevan, 1957, p. 30.
- <sup>12</sup> G. Ovsepián, *Studies in the History of Armenian Art and Culture* (in Armenian), Part I, Jerusalem, 1933, p. 26.
- <sup>13</sup> L. Khatchikian, *Colophons in Fourteenth-century Armenian Manuscripts*, p. 587.
- <sup>14</sup> After the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204 the fallen Byzantine Empire broke up into three separate Greek states: the Nicaea and Trebisonde Empires and the Despotate of Epiros. The art of Nicaea, with its emphasis on national and patriotic feelings, was based on Hellenistic traditions. It was in Nicaea that the foundations of the coming Byzantine Renaissance of the Palaeologan period (late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries) were laid. Byzantine art of the Palaeologan period (the "Third Golden Age" of Byzantium) was characterized by the revival of the Hellenistic style which manifested itself in the deliberately emphasized pictorial character of representation, in the optical treatment of figures and objects, in the accent on movements and gestures. These features were, however, borrowed from ancient art rather than based on real-life observations.
- <sup>15</sup> S. Der Nersessian, *Aght'amar*, Cambridge, 1965, p. 23.
- <sup>16</sup> L. Dournovo, *A Concise History of Old Armenian Painting*, p. 43.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- <sup>18</sup> S. Zhebelev, *The Canonical and Apocryphal Gospels* (in Russian), Petrograd, 1919, p. 84.
- <sup>19</sup> The 1249 Gospels must have also contained khorans, later lost.
- <sup>20</sup> Both scenes are included in another manuscript known to have belonged to Bishop Hovhannes (now in the Freer Gallery of Art, USA).
- <sup>21</sup> The title was suggested by Rouben Drampian. See R. Drampian, "Studies in the History of the Armenian Miniature of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries", *Annals of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia* (in Russian), 5, 1948.
- <sup>22</sup> Apart from Armenian manuscripts the Cilician scriptoria and private libraries also contained foreign, especially Greek, books. The twelfth-century Gospels from the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence is a case in point. According to S. Der Nersessian, the book is provided with Armenian page numbers, which indicates that at one time or another the manuscript was in Armenian hands.
- <sup>23</sup> V. Kazarian, *Sargis Pidzak* (in Armenian), Yerevan, 1979, p. 4.
- <sup>24</sup> A stylistically similar manuscript is to be found in the Mekhitarist Library in Vienna.



Հայ ժողովրդի մշակութային ժառանգության մեջ կարևոր տեղ են գրավում ձեռագիր-մատյանները թե իրենց բովանդակած նյութերի հարստությամբ և թե գեղարվեստական հարուստ ձևավորմամբ ու ինքնատիպ մանրանկարներով:

Տարբեր դարաշրջաններում, ինչպես ցուն երկրում, այնպես էլ նրա սահմաններից դուրս, հայկական գաղթավայրերում, ըստեղծվել և գործել են մանրանկարչական բազմաթիվ կենտրոններ ու գրչօջախներ:

Ներկա ալբոմը նվիրված է հայ մանրանկարչության այն հուշարձաններին, որոնք ստեղծվել են 13—14-րդ դարերում, երբ այդ արվեստը Հայաստանում ապրում էր զարգացման իր ամենաբուռն վերելքը, երբ բյուրեղանում և ամբողջական տեսք էր ստանում նրա ազգային նկարագիրը: 13-րդ դարի սկզբներից հայ մանրանկարչության մեջ նկատվում է նաև առանձին դպրոցների և ուղղությունների զատորոշման հետաքրքրական երևույթը: Իսկ որ կարևորն է, յուրահատկությունների այդ ամբողջ բազմազանությունը միավորում է հայ ազգային մշակույթի ընդհանուր ոգին:

12-րդ դարի կեսերից սկսած և, հատկապես, 13—14-րդ դարերում, Հայաստանի քաղաքական, տնտեսական և մշակութային կյանքն ապրում է աննախադեպ վերելքի մի շրջան: Դա պայմանավորված էր սելջուկ-թուրքերի խարխլվող տիրակալության փոխարեն ազգային իշխանությունների ստեղծման երկունքով և վրաց-հայկական ռազմաքաղաքական ամուր դաշնակցությամբ:

Ի մի համախմբելով հայ ֆեոդալական ազդեցիկ իշխանությունների գինական ուժերը, որոնք Բագրատունյաց հարստության ժամանակներից հետո տկարացել էին ու տաքանջատվել, վրացական պետության մեջ հզոր դիրքի հասած հայազգի իշխաններ Ջաքարյանները, 12-րդ դարի վերջին տասնամյակներից սկսած, ձգտում են վերջնականապես ազատագրել Հայաստանը օտար

լծից: Ջաքարյանների քաղաքական հեռանկտ ծրագրերը, թեև չունեցան լիակատար հաջողություն, քայց նրանց դեկավարությամբ մղվող ազատագրական ճակատամարտերի հետևանքը եղավ այն, որ սելջուկյան թունակալներից ազատագրվեցին կենտրոնական, հյուսիսային և հյուսիս-արևելյան Հայաստանի կարևորագույն շրջանները՝ Անի-Շիրակը, Այրարատը, Արագածոտնը, Գեղարքունիքը, Սյունիքը, Արցախը, Ուտիքը, Լոռին և այլն: Ազգային իշխանությունների ստեղծումը, քնականաբար, խթանելու էր երկրի սոցիալ-տնտեսական կյանքի առաջընթացին ու մշակույթի զարգացմանը:

13—14-րդ դդ. հայկական իրականության ամենաուշագրավ երևույթներից մեկը Միջերկրական ծովի հյուսիս-արևելյան ափերին հիմնադրված Կիլիկյան հայկական թագավորությունն էր: Մի կողմից բյուզանդական կայսրերի վարած արտագաղթեցման քաղաքականությունը, մյուս կողմից թուրք-սելջուկյան ցեղերի ներխուժումը Հայաստան պատճառ դարձան, որպեսզի հայ ալատատերերի մի մասը իրենց տասնյակ հազարավոր հպատակների հետ միասին թողնեին հայրենիքը և գնային վերաբնակվելու Կապադոկիայում, Ասորիքում և ավելի շատ՝ Կիլիկիայում: Այստեղ, հատկապես 13-րդ դարում բարենպաստ հող ստեղծվեց տնտեսության և մշակույթի վերելքի համար:

**Բարձր Հայք, նկ. 1—4, 8—10.** Մանրանկարչության արվեստը Բարձր Հայքում նոր վերելք է ապրում 13—14-րդ դդ.: Առավելապես հայտնի է դառնում Ավագ վանքի գրատունը Երզնկայում: Այստեղ ստեղծված մատյաններն աչքի են ընկնում հարդարանքի ընդհանուր կոթողայնությամբ, որը պայմանավորված էր ոչ միայն ձեռագրերի մեծադիր չափերով (ի դեպ, այստեղ է գրվել հայոց ամենասուվար ձեռագիրը՝ Մշո ճառընտիրը, 1202 թ. Մատենադարան, № 7729), այլև մանրանկարների ձևաոճական մշակ-



ման բնորոշ եղանակներով: Գեղեցիկ երկաթագրին ներդաշնակ են գուսպ և հյութեղ գույներով մշակված ծավալուն զարդաները: Բուսական ոճավորված տարրերը հիմք են հանդիսանում լուսանցազարդերի ինքնատիպ ու հետաքրքիր հորինվածքների և դրանց լուրուփի մեկնաբանման համար: Առանձնակի ուշադրություն է դարձվում անվանաթերթի ձևավորմանը: Այստեղ գլխազարդի հետ մեկտեղ կարևոր նշանակություն է ստանում գլխագիրը՝ ձրգվելով գրեթե ամբողջ էջի բարձրությամբ և հավասարվելով դիմացի լուսանցազարդին: Նրանց ձևավորման մեջ առատորեն օգտագործվում են ինչպես տարբեր բուսական ու երկրաչափական տարրեր, այնպես էլ իրական ու երևակայական թռչնակերպ ու կենդանակերպ էակներ, որոնց մի մասը ակներևորեն առնչվում է հեթանոսական ժամանակներից եկող պատկերացումների հետ:

Բարձր Հայքի մանրանկարչության հետ սերտ աղերս ունի հայ միջնադարյան արվեստի եզակի հուշարձաններից մեկը՝ «Թարգմանչաց» Ավետարանը (1232 թ. Մատենադարան, № 2743): Այս հուշարձանի տաղանդավոր հեղինակը՝ Գրիգոր ծաղկողը, հուզական առավելագույն տպավորության հասնելու համար դիմել է երփնագրի և գծային հնարանքների հետաքրքրական միջոցների, որոնք շեշտված արտահայտչականություն են հաղորդում կերպարներին:

**Աճի, նկ. 11—18.** Բագրատունյաց Հայաստանի մայրաքաղաք Աճիի և նրա շրջակայքի մշակութային օջախներում ստեղծված ձեռագրական հուշարձանների մեծ մասը, ցավոք, մատնվել է կորստի: Պահպանված նմուշները, սակայն, որոշ գաղափար են տալիս այդտեղ զարգացած մանրանկարչական ինքնատիպ մի ուղղության մասին, որը սերտորեն շաղկապվում է նոր կազմավորվող քաղաքային խավերի գեղագիտական նախասիրությունների ու ճաշակի հետ: Այստեղ պատկերագրական հին սխեմա-

ներն ու թեմաները երբեմն ներկայացվում են աշխարհիկ երանգավորմամբ. օրինակ, Հաղբառի Ավետարանի (1211 թ. Մատենադարան, № 6288) միակ տերունական նկարը՝ Մուտք Երուսաղեմը, ընկալվում է իբրև ժանրային մի տեսարան: Ավետարանում տեղ են գտել նաև ժամանակակիցների դիմանկարներ: Հատկապես հետաքրքիր են նրանց խնամքով նկարված զգեստները, որոնք զգալի արժեք են ներկայացնում ազգագրական տեսանկյունից:

**Սյունիք, նկ. 14—26, 28—31.** Սյունիքում իրենց գործունեությունն են ծավալել միջնադարյան Հայաստանի առավել նշանավոր բարձրագույն երկու դպրոցները՝ Գլաձորը (13-րդ դ. վերջ, 14-րդ դ. սկիզբ) և Տաթևը (14-րդ դ.): Ուսումնագիտական այդ կենտրոնները սերտ կապերի մեջ էին Հայաստանի տարբեր վայրերի և նույնիսկ հեռավոր Կիլիկիայի հետ: Ձեռագրերի գրչության ու նկարազարդման արվեստն այստեղ ուսուցման առաջնակարգ առարկաների թվին էր պատկանում և զարմանալի չէ, որ Գլաձորի մանրանկարիչները հայ արվեստի պատմության մեջ թողել են իրենց անցնջելի հետքը: Ավագ սերնդի ներկայացուցիչների գործերում բավական ամուր են տեղական հնամենի ավանդույթները. այդ բնորոշ գիծը մասամբ պահպանվեց նաև հաջորդ սերնդի նկարիչների՝ Մովսիկի, Թորոս Տարոնացու և այլոց գործերում, ուր զգացվում է նաև կիլիկյան արվեստի ներգործությունը:

Գլաձորի մշակույթի ավանդույթները շարունակվում ու նոր զարգացման են հասնում Տաթևի դպրոցում: 14-րդ դարի վերջում այստեղ հիմնադրված համալսարանը դեկավարում է միջնադարյան հայ փիլիսոփայական մտքի խոշորագույն ներկայացուցիչներից մեկը՝ Գրիգոր Տաթևացին՝ լայն գիտելիքների տեր մի գիտնական, որը զբաղվել է նաև նկարչությամբ: Մեզ է հասել նրա ձեռքով պատկերազարդված մի Ավետարան (XIV դ., Մատենադարան, №



7482): Պահպանելով բուն Հայաստանի արվեստին քնորոշ կոթողայնությունը, Տաթևացին իր մանրանկարները շահեկանորեն աշխուժացնում է զարդադեկորատիվ տարրերով: Մասնավորապես մանրանկարների խորքը նա լրիվ ծածկում է բուսական և երկրաչափական հյուսածո զարդամներով և այդ խորքի վրա պատկերում է մարդկային կերպարներ, որոնք իրենց խոժոռ ու խրատակյաց դիմագծերի շնորհիվ թվում են կենդանի ու վեհաշուք:

Ջարդանախշը լայն կիրառություն է ստանում Սյունիքում: Այստեղ 14-րդ դարի վերջին կամ 15-րդ դարի սկզբին նկարագարված ձեռագրում (Մատենադարան, № 6305), դեկորատիվ մոտիվները գերիշխող դեր են խաղում ողջ հորինվածքի մեջ: Արևելյան դիմագծերով կերպարները պատկերված են կենդանի և արտահայտիչ: Դեկորատիվ տպավորությանը նպաստում են նաև անխառն ներկերի աշխույժ համադրությունները. ընդ որում տիրապետող վարդագույնն ու քաց կանաչն է:

**Վասպուրական, նկ. 37—59.** Վասպուրականում գործել է հայկական մանրանկարչության ամենախոշոր դպրոցներից մեկը (13-րդ դ. 2-րդ կես—17-րդ դ.), որից մեզ են հասել շուրջ 1500 ձեռագիր մատյան: Վասպուրականի ձեռագրերի գեղարվեստական հարդարանքը, մանրանկարների ընդհանուր դասավորության և ոճի առումով, ունի իր քնորոշ առանձնահատկությունները: Նկարներն այստեղ ներկայացվում են հմամենի կարգով՝ ձեռագրի սկզբի թերթերի վրա, բնագրից ու խորանագրերից էլ առաջ, ասես վերածվելով պատկերային յուրօրինակ նախերգանքի:

Խիստ բազմազան է թեմատիկան: Այն ընդգրկում է աստվածաշնչական սյուժեներից մինչև ժողովրդական կենցաղապատկերները, կրոնական միստիկայից մինչև ռեթանոսական բնապաշտության քրիստոնե-

ացված արձագանքները: Հմամենի քնորոշունի նաև տերունական նկարների պատկերագրությունը: Դրանց նախատիպերը մասամբ հանդիպում են 10—11-րդ դդ. հուշարձաններում: Առավել ինքնատիպը Վասպուրականի մանրանկարներում ոճական առանձնահատկություններն են: Հորինվածքների կառուցվածքը և առանձին կերպարների մեկնաբանումն այստեղ ենթարկված է հարթությանը: Արտահայտման հիմնական միջոցը գիծն է, որն առավել կենդանություն է ստանում մաքուր, հնչեղ գույների համադրությամբ:

Կերպարները հիմնականում ճակատադին դիրքով են. շարժումները՝ կտրուկ, խիստ աշխույժ, ասես սիմվոլիկ իմաստի հաղցիված: Գլխավորը մնում է թեմայի մեկնաբանման իմաստային կողմը՝ լինի դա ներկայացված պարզ պատմողական եղանակով, թե շատ հակիրճ սխեմատիկ մեկնաբանությամբ: Ահա այդ սկզբնատարրից էլնելով, Վասպուրականի մանրանկարիչները շահում են ցույց տալ ոչ այնքան մարդու կամ առարկայական աշխարհի որոշակի ձևը՝ իրատիպ մանրամասներով, որքան երբեմն դրանց այսպես ասած «նիշ-պատկերները»: Վերջիններիս միջոցով էլ նրանք կարողանում են բացահայտել գործողության հիմքում ընկած գաղափարը, գործողության ընթացքը: Նման պարագայում նկարիչը կերպարի «հարաբերությունների» գոտին սահմանափակում է ավելի շատ վերը նշված «նիշ-պատկերային» մոդելներով, քան զանազան այլ մանրամասների ցուցադրմամբ:

Չժանրանալով մանրուքների վրա Վասպուրականի մանրանկարիչները հիմնական բովանդակության և առանձին պահերի դրսևլորմանը հասնում են հորինվածքների, դիմամիկ շարժումների, դիրմիկ գծերի ու միմյանցից զատվող չեզոք, բայց հնչեղ գույների համադրության միջոցով, այսինքն՝ ամբողջի մեջ և ամբողջի շնորհիվ է դրսև-



վորվում մասնակին: Գեղանկարչական այդ սկզբունքների շրջանակներում Վասպուրականի տաղանդավոր մանրանկարիչները (Սիմեոն Արճիշեցի, Զաքարիա Աղթամարցի, Կիրակոս, Ծերուն, Հովհաննես Խիզանցի և այլք) ցուցադրում են սեփական վերաբերմունք՝ դիտողին հաղորդակից դարձնելով իրենց երևակայությանն ու հետաքրքրասիրություններին:

Ընդհանրապես Վասպուրականի մանրանկարներում սկզբունքային նշանակություն է ստանում բուն ժողովրդական արվեստը, նրա արտահայտչական պարզ լեզվի, երբեմն նույնիսկ գրոտեսկային թվացող հնարանքների օգտագործումը: Այդ ամենը ամբողջովին ներթափանցված է «գեղանկարչական ֆոլկլորայնության» հարուստ տարրերով, որոնք գրավչություն են հաղորդում այդ աշխատանքներին: Դա Վասպուրականի մանրանկարչության բնորոշ կողմերից մեկն է:

**Արցախ և Ուտիք, նկ. 64—78.** 12-րդ դարից սկսած Արցախ և Ուտիք նահանգների սոցիալ-տնտեսական և մշակութային կյանքի համար ստեղծվում են բարենպաստ պայմաններ: Սկսվում է կարճատև մի վերելքի շրջան, և մատենական գեղանկարչությունը այստեղ հասնում է բարձր մակարդակի: Արցախ-Ուտիքում նկարագարված ձեռագրերը կարելի է բաժանել երկու խմբի: Առաջին խումբը (Մատենադարան, № 378, 4823, 379, 155) հատկանշվում է բուն «արեվելյան» հայկական արվեստին ներհատուկ գծերով: Խորաններն ու անվանաթերթերն ունեն կոթողային ամուր կառուցվածք՝ հըստակ նկարված զարդերի դեկորատիվ բնույթով: Նկարիչը նախընտրում է ավելի պարզ ու հասկանալի ձևեր: Մոտեցման նույն ըսկզբունքը պահպանվում է նաև գունային կառուցվածքում: Ներկերի հյութեղ շերտերը դրվում են բավականաչափ չեզոք, անխառն հարաբերակցությամբ՝ առանց գունա-երանգային նրբացման ու բարդացման: Առանձ-

նապես տալովորիչ են մարդկանց կերպարները, ուր նկարիչը կարողանում է հուզական լիցք և լավատեսական տրամդրություն հաղորդել:

Երկրորդ խմբի ձեռագրերը (Մատենադարան, № 316, 4820, 6303, 6319, 4023) ունեն բավական միատն մանրանկարներ: Թե՛ պատկերագրական տարբերակների իրենց յուրահատկություններով և թե՛ թեմատիկայի ընտրությամբ այդ թերթերը առանձնանում են հայ մանրանկարչության մյուս դպրոցների աշխատանքներից: Այստեղ մանրանկարները մի տեսակ ամփոփ բնույթ են կրում: Կերպարների մեկնաբանման հարթապլանային ու դեկորատիվ-զարդային ձևերը լայն հյուսազարդ շրջանակների հետ միավորված են մեկ ամբողջականությամբ: Գունաշարը հիմնականում հագեցված է փոքր-ինչ խուլ տոներով: Սպիտակի խառնուրդը և նրա նուրբ ընթացքը եզրագծերի հետ թուլացնում է առանձին վերցրած գույնի սրությունը, իսկ մանուշակագույն երանգների առատությունը նույնիսկ հարուցում է ռոմանտիկ հնչեղություն:

**Նախիջևան, նկ. 60—63.** Վասպուրականի, մասամբ նաև Արցախ և Ուտիքի, մանրանկարչության հետ սերտ աղերսներ ունի Նախիջևանի և նրա մերձակա վայրերի ձեռագրերի պատկերազարդման արվեստը: Նախիջևանի մանրանկարչությունից այստեղ ներկայացված են առավել ուշագրավ երկու հուշարձան (Մատենադարան № 3722 և 2930): Առաջինի նկարիչն է Սիմեոնը, երկրորդինը՝ Մարգարեն: Սիմեոնը պատկերը տեղադրում է ոչ թե բնագրի կարգում, այլ լուսանցքներում և համառոտում այն աստիճան, որ դրանք գրեթե վերածվում են խորհրդանշի: Այսպես, «Մկրտությունը» պատկերելու փոխարեն՝ նկարում է միայն լուղի անոթ, «Ծնունդը»՝ մի քանի հովիվ ու գառներ, «Խորհրդավոր ընթրիքը»՝ սկուտեղ՝ մեջը երկու ձուկ և այլն: Պատկերագրական այդ սկզբունքը, անշուշտ, գալիս է



հնամենի ավանդույթից: Մարգարեն ևս հետևում է հին ավանդներին: Նրա մոտ տերունական պատկերներում կան ուշագրավ, երբեմն խիստ ինքնատիպ մեկնաբանություններ, որոնք գունային զուսպ, փոքր-ինչ դեղնաստոր կառուցվածքի հետ սրբապատկերային տրամադրություն են ստեղծում: Խորանների և անվանաթերթերի պատկերազարդման մեջ շատ են երևակայական կենդանիներ, ինչպես նաև հին հեթանոսական հավատալիքներից եկող խորհրդանշիչներ:

**Կիլիկյան մանրանկարչություն, նկ. 79—152.** Կիլիկիայի մատենական գեղանկարչության ակունքները գալիս են բուն Հայաստանի 11-րդ դ. մանրանկարչությունից: Իր զարգացման ողջ ընթացքում կիլիկյան գեղանկարչությունը պահպանեց ազգային ինքնատիպության բնորոշ առանձնահատկությունները՝ հարազատ մնալով բնաշխարհիկ Հայաստանի արվեստի հիմունքներին: Պատմաքաղաքական, հասարակական-տնտեսական և մշակութային կյանքի մոր գործոնները, սակայն, չէին կարող իրենց յուրահատուկ հատկանիշների և գեղարվեստական աշխարհայեցողության կնիքը չդնել կիլիկյան մատենական գեղանկարչության վրա: Այստեղ, մոր միջավայրում, ժամանակի հետ զգալիորեն փոխվում են թե՛ ձևագրերի ձևավորման սկզբունքները և թե՛ գեղարվեստական ոճի ընդհանուր հատկությունները: Ամենից առաջ փոքրանում է ձևագրի չափը, դրան համապատասխան էլ՝ մանրանկարների չափերը: 13-րդ դարի կեսից սկսած կիլիկյան գեղանկարչական զարդարանքները դառնում են առավել մոխու շքեղ, տերունական հիմնական նկարաշարից բացի պատկերվում են նաև երկրորդական իրադարձություններ, այդ տեսարանները գեղեցիկում են առանձին թերթերի լուսանցքներում, բնագրի այն հատվածի արանքում կամ կողքին, որի լուսաբանմանը վերաբերում է մանրանկարը: Բացի դրա-

նից՝ կիլիկյան նկարիչները սկսում են պատկերազարդել ոչ միայն Ավետարանը, որը նկարազարդման հիմնական գիրքն էր հանդիսանում, այլև Աստվածաշունչը, Շաշոցը, Սաղմոսարանը, Նարեկը և այլն:

Փոխվում է նաև մանրանկարչական արվեստի ընդհանուր ոճը. այն ձեռք է բերում ավելի նրբին, շքեղ և, վերջին հաշվով, ավելի «մանրանկարչական» բնույթ: Եթե վաղ շրջանի հայ մատենական գեղանկարչության օրինակները իրենց խոշոր կերպարանքներով, լայն ու ազատ վրձնահարվածներով և համեմատաբար զուսպ գունաշարով ընկալվում էին որպես փոքրացած որմնանկարներ, ապա կիլիկյան մանրանկարչությունը, մանավանդ 13-րդ դարից սկսած, արդեն զուտ մատենական գեղանկարչություն է:

2-նայած կիլիկյան ողջ գեղանկարչության համար բնորոշ ոճական այս ընդհանրությանը, այնուամենայնիվ, նրա մեջ առանձնանում են մի քանի դպրոցներ, որոնք թեև սերտ աղերսներ ունեն միմյանց հետ, բայց և այնպես նրանցից յուրաքանչյուրը դրսևորում է գեղարվեստական այս կամ այն կենտրոնին ներհատուկ իր մասնավոր հատկանիշներն ու գծերը: Առավել նշանակալից կենտրոններ էին Հոռմկյան, ուր գտնվում էր Հայոց կաթողիկոսի աթոռանիստը, Դրազարկը, Ակները և Գոները, որոնք Սսից հեռու չէին և սերտ կապեր ունեին արքունի տան հետ, և, վերջապես, Սկևռան, որը գտնվում էր Կիլիկիայի ամենաազդեցիկ և լուսավորյալ իշխանների՝ Օշիկյանների տիրույթում:

Հոռմկյայում 13-րդ դ. 30—70-ական թթ. ստեղծագործող նկարիչներն արդեն ոտք են դնում գեղարվեստական այն որոնումների ուղին, որը շատ կողմերով կանխում էր պալեոլոգյան վերածնության շրջանի բյուզանդական վարպետների միտումները: Նրանք ձգտում են դուրս գալ միջնադարյան կանոնի կաշկանդիչ շրջանակից և հորին-



վածքներին տալիս են որոշակի խորություն, իսկ մարդկային կերպարանքներին՝ ծավալանություն, նրանց ներկայացնելով իրենց ավելի բնական կեցվածքներով: Ավանդական տեսարաններն ավելի ճշմարտացի պատկերելու այդ ուղղությունն իր ամենացայտուն և լիակատար արտահայտությունն է գտել Թորոս Ռուսինի՝ ոչ միայն կիլիկյան, այլև առհասարակ հայ մանրանկարչական արվեստի բազմադարյան պատմության այդ խոշորագույն գեղանկարչի, ստեղծագործության մեջ:

Եթե 13-րդ դարի 50—60-ական թթ. մանրանկարչական արվեստը կիլիկյան մատենական գեղանկարչության պատմության մեջ նշանավորում է նրա դասական փուլը, ապա 80—90-ական թթ. այն թեակոխում է նոր փուլ՝ կրելով արդեն զգալի փոփոխություններ: Այդ տարիների արվեստը հանդիսացավ Թորոս Ռուսինի ավանդույթների տրամաբանական զարգացումը:

Կենսական ճշմարտացիության իրենց վերարտադրման մեջ նրանք երբեմն ավելի առաջ են անցնում Ռուսինից և որոշ չափով խախտում նրա արվեստին ներհատուկ վեհացնող իդեալի մշակված կանոնները: Ռուսինի և նրա անմիջական նախորդների արվեստի վճիտ հավասարակշռությանն ու զսպվածությանը փոխարինելու է գալիս դրամատիզմով և շարժունությամբ տոգորված նոր արվեստը:

14-րդ դ. նկարիչների համար բնութագրական է ցայտուն արտահայտված արևելյան միտումը, որը դրսևորվում է թե պատկերագրության և թե մանրանկարների ոճական առանձնահատկությունների վեջ: Կիլիկյան մատենական գեղանկարչության այդ կտրուկ շրջադարձը համընկավ երկրի քաղաքական և հասարակական կյանքի դրամատիկ իրադարձություններին: 14-րդ դարի սկզբին սրված ավատատիրական հակասությունները մի կողմից, եգիպտական մամլուկների ավերիչ արշավանքները մյուս

կողմից, պատճառ դարձան Կիլիկյան հայկական թագավորության անկմանը:

Կիլիկյան արվեստի վերջին փուլը ավելի վառ արտահայտություն է գտել Սարգիս Պիծակի ստեղծագործության մեջ: 13-րդ դարի կիլիկյան արվեստի (ամենից առաջ՝ դեկորատիվ կառուցվածքների հնարների) հետ ունեցած որոշակի ժառանգականությամբ հանդերձ, իր ստեղծագործության մեջ, ընդհանուր առմամբ, Պիծակը տալիս է ոճի այնպիսի օրինակ, որը նշանակալից կերպով տարբերվում է 13-րդ դարի կիլիկյան ձեռագրերում տիրապետող ոճից: Կատարման փայլուն վարպետություն, ընդհանուր զարդանկարչական-դեկորատիվ շքեղություն—ահա Սարգիս Պիծակի ստեղծագործության առավել ուժեղ կողմերը:

Կիլիկյան 13-րդ դարի գեղանկարչությունը ոչ միայն հայ արվեստի բազմադարյան պատմության ամենափայլուն էջերից մեկն է, այլև ակնառու երևույթ ամբողջ միջնադարյան մատենական գեղանկարչության մեջ:

**Հայկական գաղթավայրերի մանրանկարչությունը, նկ. 27, 82—86, 153—164.** Մաշտոցի անվան Մատենադարանում պահվող հայկական ձեռագրերի մի որոշ մասը ընդօրինակվել և նկարազարդվել է հայկական գաղթօջախներում: Խուսափելով մշտապես կրկնվող օտար նվաճողների մահասփյուռ ասպատակություններից, հայ բնակչությունը փրկություն որոնելիս երբեմն հեռանում է հայրենի երկրից, հանգրվանելով հեռավոր ափերում: Հայկական գաղթավայրեր են ստեղծվում Բյուզանդիայում, Իտալիայում, Իրանում, Հնդկաստանում, Ղրիմում, Ռուսաստանում, Բուլղարիայում, Ռումինիայում, Լեհաստանում և այլուր:

Հայկական հնագույն և նշանավոր գաղթավայրերից մեկը եղել է **Ղրիմում**: Գաղութը սակայն, իր բարգավաճմանը հասավ 14—15-րդ դարերում: Ղրիմի գաղթօջախը կազմավորվել է գլխավորապես Բարձր Հայ-



քից, Անի-Շիրակից, ինչպես նաև Կիլիկիայից՝ նրա թագավորության անկումից հետո գաղթած հայ բնակչության զանգվածներից: Այս կարևոր հանգամանքն էլ պայմանավորեց Ղրիմում ստեղծված մանրանկարչական արվեստի բնույթը՝ բնաշխարհիկ Հայաստանի և Կիլիկյան ավանդների հետաքրքիր զուգորդմամբ: Ավելացնենք նաև, որ ղրիմահայությունը մեկուսացած չմնաց հարևան ժողովուրդների մշակութային առնչակցություններից: Իրենց նախասիրություններին համապատասխան, նրանք ստեղծագործաբար յուրացնում էին հատկապես հույների և ճննովացիների արվեստի նորություններն ու առանձին նվաճումները, միևնույն ժամանակ՝ փոխադարձաբար հաղորդակից դարձնելով ուրիշներին հայ մշակույթի հին ու հարուստ ավանդներին:

Գաղութի մշակութային գլխավոր կենտրոնները Կաֆա (այժմ՝ Թեոդոսիա) և Սուրխաթ (այժմ՝ Ստարի Կրիմ) քաղաքներն էին: Սուրխաթում նկարագարված ձեռագրերից աչքի է ընկնում 1332 թ. (Մատենադարան, № 7664) Ավետարանը: Նկարիչը անտարակույս ծանոթ է եղել պալեոլոգյան վերածննդի հուշարձաններին և կրել է այդ ուղի թարերար ազդեցությունը, հմտորեն զուգորդելով այն հայ մատենական գեղանկարչության բնորոշ հատկանիշներին: Առանձնակի հետաքրքրություն են ներկայացնում նկարիչ Կիրակոսի աշխատանքները (Մատենադարան, № 7408 (1356 թ.) և 7741 (1360 թ.): Նա, ստեղծագործական իր անհատական մոտեցմամբ, համադրում է կիլիկյան և բուն Հայաստանի կերպարվեստի ավանդները՝ կրելով նաև արևմտյան արվեստի ազդեցությունը:

Իտալիայում կազմավորված հայկական գաղթավայրերը ևս հին պատմություն ունեն: Դրանք մասամբ արդյունք էին Կիլիկ-

յան Հայաստանի և իտալական առևտրական ազատ քաղաքների միջև գոյություն ունեցող տնտեսական սերտ կապերի:

Իտալական գաղթավայրերում ստեղծված հայկական ձեռագրերի մեջ հանդիպում են մանրանկարչության բարձրարժեք օրինակներ: Դրանցից մեկը (Մատենադարան, № 2705, XIII դ.) ներկայացված է սույն պրոմում: Ի դեպ, այդ ձեռագիրը հետազայում տեղափոխվել է Ղրիմ և լրացվել նոր մանրանկարներով:

Բազմամարդ է եղել ու ստեղծագործական եռուն կյանքով է ապրել Իրանի հայ գաղթավայրը: Բավական է ասել, որ մեզ հետաքրքրող ժամանակահատվածում միայն Օրտու-Բազարում (Սուլթանիա քաղաքի մոտ) աշխատել են երկու ճշանավոր հայ մանրանկարիչներ՝ Ավագը և Մխիթար Անցիին: Նրե առաջինը հիմնականում որդեգրել է կիլիկյան արվեստի ավանդները, ապա վերջինի վրա նկատելի է պարսկական արվեստի ազդեցությունը:

Ավարտելով Հայաստանի 13—14-րդ դարերի մանրանկարչության մասին այս ակնարկը, ճշենք, որ ոճերի և ուղղությունների այն բազմազանությունը, որ հանդես են բերել հայ վարպետները, մեծ վերելքներն ու ժամանակավոր ընդհատումները, եղել են իրենց դարաշրջանի հատարական-քաղաքական ու մշակութային բուռն ու հետաքրքրական, երբեմն նաև ողբերգական տեղաշարժերի արտացոլումը: Մի բան, սակայն, այդ հարյուրամյակների ստեղծագործական կյանքի ընթացքում միշտ էլ եղել է հաստատուն. վրձնի հայ վարպետները ըստ ստեղծագործաբար յուրացնելով ժամանակի առաջավոր ձգտումները, նոր գաղափարներն ու արվեստի նվաճումները, մայր հողի վրա, թե հեռավոր գաղթավայրերում՝ ամուր ու հոգեհարազատ են մնացել հայ ազգային գեղանկարչության ավանդույթներին:



PLATES  
NOTES ON THE PLATES



# GREATER ARMENIA





1 Title-page, f. 2



## 1, 2

**HOMILIARIUM** (Ms. 7729, known as the Mush Homiliary, as it once belonged to the Arakelots monastery in the town of Mush)

1202, Avagvank monastery near town of Yerzinka<sup>1</sup>

Written by Vardan, illuminated by Stepanos

Parchment, 70.5 × 55 cm, 603 ff.

Title-page, 4 full-page historiated miniatures, portrait of the owner, headpieces, marginals

The Mush Homiliary is remarkable for its unique size: it is the largest known Armenian manuscript. Its present weight (without the missing binding and several folios) is 27.5 kg. The history of the manuscript is of considerable interest. In the year it was completed a Seljuk army invaded Armenia and ravaged the town of Baberd. The manuscript which was there at the time of the invasion came into the possession of a Turkish judge. Two years later the judge put it on sale for 5,000 silver coins. To purchase the Homiliary the monks from Mush collected donations for a whole year; in 1205 they finally amassed the necessary sum and bought the manuscript. It was transferred to Mush and placed in the library of the Arakelots monastery. In the nineteenth century the manuscript was divided into two parts for the sake of convenience and each part was bound separately. During World War I both parts of the manuscript, minus the bindings and several folios, were transferred independently of each other to Echmiadzin.

## 1 TITLE-PAGE, f. 2

This is the only title-page in the manuscript. Its decor is evocative of the traditional arch-shaped ornamentation of the Canon tables, but the right-hand column is replaced by a large decorative initial. The name of the illuminator, Stepanos, is inscribed on the left-hand part of the page. It is traditionally assumed that the manuscript was illuminated by three artists, though the names of two of them remain unknown. The decor mainly consists of interlacing patterns which incorporate the figures of both naturalistic and fantastic birds and animals inspired by ancient symbolism and heathen totems.

<sup>1</sup> In each entry, only the place where the manuscript was illuminated is given.

2\* THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, f. 252v<sup>2</sup>

Miniatures incorporated into the text are rarely found in Armenian manuscripts before the thirteenth century. The earliest example in the Matenadaran is a Gospel manuscript dating from the late tenth or early eleventh century (Ms. 10780). In the centre of the composition, instead of the usual solitary tree, the artist placed two. Other characteristics deserving of special attention which go back to earlier iconographic models concern the treatment of the image of Christ depicted with a short beard, the types and postures of the Apostles, and the representation of Jerusalem.

## 3, 4

## THE GOSPELS (Ms. 10359)

1201, Avagvank monastery near town of Yerzinka

Written by Stepanos; portraits of the Evangelists added in 1250 by Hovhannes (name of original illuminator unknown)

Parchment, 30.5 × 21 cm, 310 ff.

Ornate cross, khorans (see p. 33, note 7), portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, marginals, initials

## 3\* CROSS, f. 1v

Representations of crosses raised on an ornamental base and decorated with floral motifs or with interlaced bands are usually found in the margins of Armenian manuscripts, full-page crosses occurring only in the earliest known books (ninth and tenth centuries). Such crosses form a prominent feature of the art of Eastern Christendom, especially of Syrian art.

In many cases the ornamental and compositional treatment of the crosses is evocative of Armenian khatchkars (see p. 33, note 2).

## 4 FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW, f. 11

The free compositional arrangement of the headpiece is rare for an early thirteenth-century manuscript. It shows that the artist was seeking new forms in the ornamentation of title-pages. The patterns in the decor of the headpiece go back to the ancient ornamental art of Asia Minor, although the large initial incorporating a face representing St. Matthew is definitely original.

<sup>2</sup> The miniatures marked by an asterisk are published here for the first time.















5

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 4509)

1217, Airivank monastery near Garni

Vellum, 29 × 23 cm, 317 ff.

Written by Abel, illuminated by Sargis Pidzak

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists (two of the four are missing), first pages, marginals, initials

## 5\* KHORAN, f. 1

The treatment of the khoran is somewhat unusual. The space within the framework, instead of containing the text of the letter of Eusebius or the Canon tables, is filled with an ornamental pattern of crescent-shaped, pointed and swirling leaves. The pattern is similar to those used in the Mush Homiliarium and in the 1201 Gospels and is also evocative of the wall reliefs in the monastery of Airivank where the manuscript was produced.

6

**LECTIONARY** (Ms. 4519)

1362, town of Yerzyuka

Written (and possibly illuminated) by Sargis

Vellum, 35 × 24 cm, 429 ff.

Title-pages, numerous marginal miniatures, initials

## 6\* DANIEL'S VISION, f. 67v

Illustrations to the vision stories first appeared in Armenian miniature painting towards the end of the thirteenth century and later became a traditional part of the Gospel cycle. In their treatment of these subjects the artists, although mainly relying upon the iconographic canon, sometimes offered their own interpretation. The artist imitated the models which were in wide use at the time in Armenian book illumination.

7-10

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 2743, known as the Targmantschants Gospels, after the monastery where it was kept for a considerable period of time)

1232, place of production unknown

Written by Tiranu, illuminated by Grigor

Parchment, 30 × 26 cm, 374 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 7 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

## 7 LETTER OF EUSEBIUS TO CARPIANUS, f. 2

The headpiece of the khoran contains a half-length portrait of Carpianus (on another folio, there is a similar portrait of Eusebius). According to S. Der Nersessian, such portraits placed inside medallions are "a typically Armenian feature which does not occur in Byzantine or other East Christian manuscripts" (S. Der Nersessian, *Armenian Manuscripts*, Washington, 1963, p. 20). The ornamental design is derived from eleventh- and twelfth-century models.

## 8 THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 188v

The highly expressive character of Grigor's miniatures is mainly due to their original colouring. The artist uses combinations of deep, dark, sometimes shimmering shades. The intensity of colour gives a dramatic quality to the Gospel scenes. This also applies to Grigor's interpretation of The Annunciation, usually treated as a happy and joyous scene: apart from the colouring, the dramatic effect of the miniature is heightened by the expression of anxiety on the faces of Mary and the archangel.

## 9 THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN, f. 294

The miniature is characterized by the grandeur of the canonical composition in which the general setting is reminiscent of a church interior. The overall solemnity of the scene is also felt in the postures of Christ and the Apostles and in the strictly symmetrical arrangement of the figures.

## 10 THE DESCENT INTO LIMBO, f. 184

The intrinsic dramatism of the episode is further enhanced in Grigor's interpretation by the dark blue of the abyss, by the hazardous conglomeration of rocks in the background and, finally, by the dynamic intensity of the entire composition based on intercrossing diagonal planes.















ANNO DOMINI MCCCCLXXXV





Assumptio virginis









11

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 1519)

1212, Horomos monastery near city of Ani

Written and illuminated by Ignatios

Parchment, 42 x 29 cm, 299 ff.

First pages, marginals, initials

**11 FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK, f. 29**

Although the manuscript does not contain any historiated miniatures, it still possesses great artistic value due to its ornamental decor executed with remarkable skill and taste.

12, 13

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 6288, known as the Haghbat Gospels, after the village of Haghbat where it was written and where it remained for a long time)

1211, Horomos monastery near city of Ani

Written by Hakob, illuminated by Markare

Parchment, 30 x 23 cm, 360 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 2 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

**12 KHORAN, f. 8v**

There are two figures in the left-hand margin of the Canon table, outside the arch of the khoran; the one below is a man carrying a large fish. The inscription beside this figure reads: "Sheranik, when you come, bring fish." This would seem to suggest that the figures in the margin represent real people, their rich attire being a sign of wealth and prominent social position.

**13 THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, f. 16v**

The miniature resembles an informal genre scene representing the warm welcome given by the citizens to a guest of their city. The illusion of "real life" is enhanced by the similarity of the architectural background to actually existing buildings: the tall three-storeyed tower on the left is strongly reminiscent of the bell-tower at the monastery of Haghbat.

14

**THE BIBLE** (Ms. 6230)

Written in Cilicia by Martiros, 1314; illuminated in Gladzor by Avag, 1356-58

Parchment, 36 x 25 cm, 509 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists (two of the four are missing), title-pages, 7 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

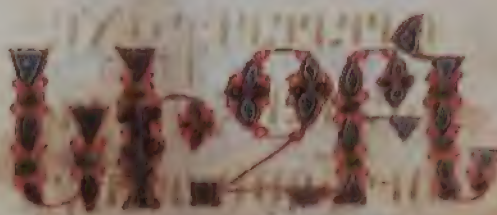
**14 THE NATIVITY, f. 399v**

The enlarged version of the scene represented in the miniature includes the motifs of The Annunciation to the Shepherds, of The Adoration of the Magi and of The Bathing of the Child. The portraits of the donor and his wife are skillfully incorporated into the composition. Their faces were apparently painted with a view to achieving a likeness. The meticulously depicted costumes of the donors present considerable ethnographic interest.





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13 The Entry into Jerusalem, f. 16v





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15, 16

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT (Ms. 6792)

1302, Siunik

Written and illuminated by Momik

Parchment, 12 × 8.6 cm, 302 ff.

Portraits of the Evangelists, first pages of the Gospels, 12 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

The manuscript was owned by a well-known historian and political figure of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Armenia, Stepanos Orbelian.

#### 15 THE NATIVITY, f. 2

Contrary to the iconographic canon the figure of St. Joseph is placed in the centre of the composition, right over the figures of the Virgin and Child, instead of in the usual left corner. This arrangement of the figures was supposed to emphasise the importance of St. Joseph.

#### 16 THE TRANSFIGURATION, f. 5v

The deliberately archaic treatment of Christ who is depicted without the traditional beard serves to heighten the effect of Transfiguration. The background is filled with a multitude of clouds, presented schematically as so many transparent blue spheres. The colouring is based on silvery-blue shades.

17

#### THE BIBLE (Ms. 206)

1318, Gladzor monastery, Siunik

Written by Stepanos, illuminated by Toros Taronatsi

Parchment, 26 × 18 cm, 588 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, title-pages, 27 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

#### 17 KHORAN, f. 438

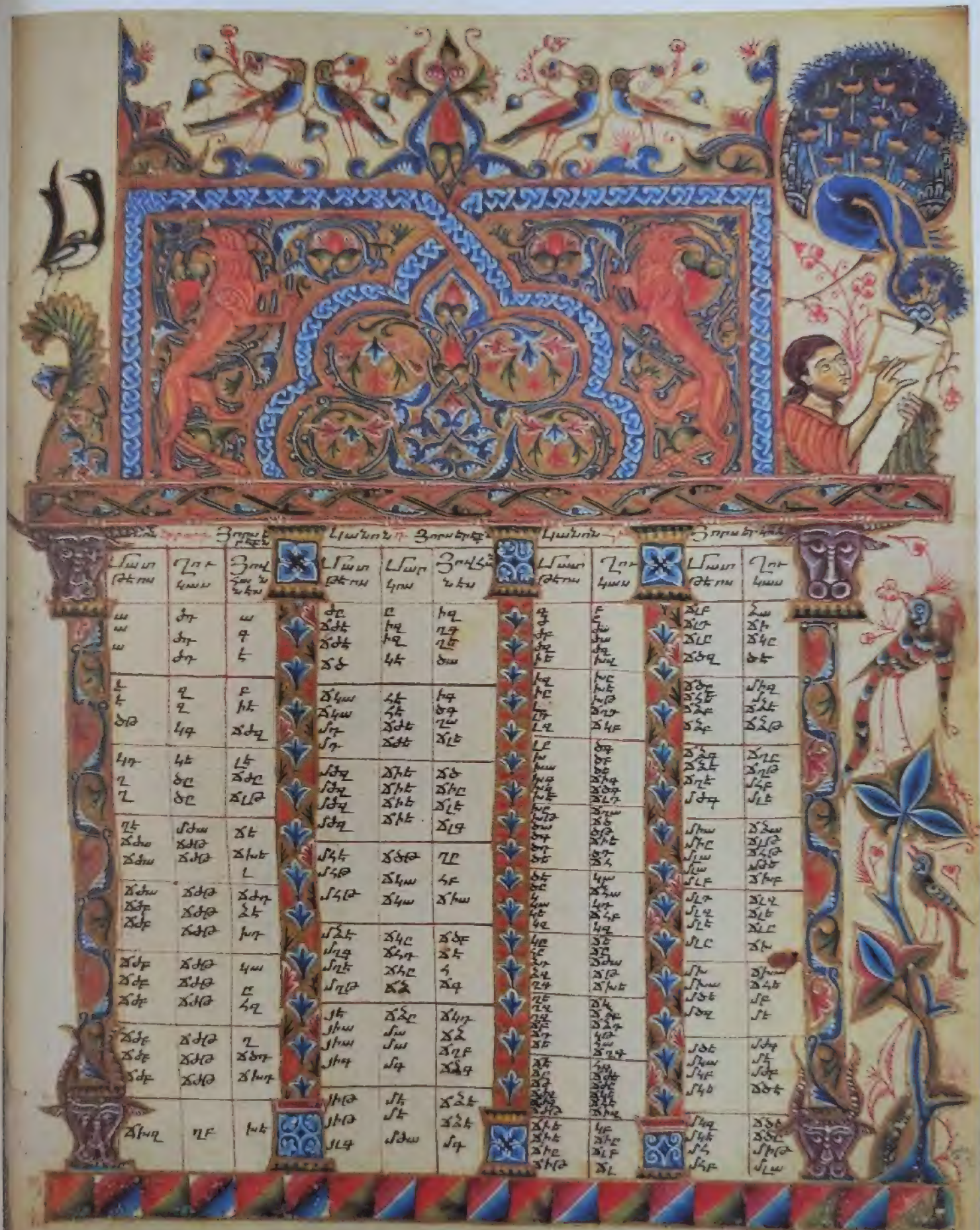
The most striking feature in the illumination of this manuscript is the composition and decor of its large khorans. Their rectangular headpieces are filled with floral ornament whose intricate design incorporates small figures of birds and animals. The artist increases the number of columns from the usual three or four to five and sometimes seven, and occasionally introduces human figures flanking the headpieces. In this case, we have the artist's self-portrait.



15 The Nativity, f. 2

16 The Transfiguration, f. 5v







18-20

## THE GOSPELS (Ms. 212)

1337, town of Sultaniae, Iran

Written, illuminated and bound by Avag

Parchment, 18.1 x 13 cm, 315 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 80 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

## 18\* THE VISITATION, f. 157

The scene depicts the visit of the Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, just after the Annunciation. The decor of the folio is characterized by a balance and harmony between the text, on the one hand, and the miniature and marginal ornamentation, on the other, as well as by a delicacy of linear treatment, by a softness of colouring and elegance of representation.

## 19 TWO KHORANS, ff. 11v, 12

The khorans owe some of their stylistic peculiarities to Cilician models. The artist succeeded not only in imitating the elaborate and intricate ornamental designs of the latter, but also in mastering the exquisite and virtuoso technique typical of the Cilician miniaturists.

## 20\* THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST, ff. 17v, 18

Following Cilician tradition, Avag included in his illumination of the Gospel not only the menological cycle but also all the secondary and intermediate episodes. In accordance with the opening passages of the Gospel of St. Matthew, the artist begins with the "genealogy" of Christ, depicting Christ's ancestors. They are represented in lively and natural postures, the figure of King David seated on his throne being the most striking of all. These representations are incorporated into the text of the Gospels copied in the beautiful *erkatagir* hand (uncial script with large characters).



18 The Visitation, f. 157





19 Two khorans, ff. 11v, 12

20 The Ancestors of Christ, ff. 17v, 18



21, 22

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 6289)

1323, Gladzor monastery, Siunik

Written and illuminated by Toros Taronatsi

Parchment, 25 × 19 cm, 286 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, 11 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

The miniatures in this manuscript are among Taronatsi's best works. In these miniatures the local traditions of Siunik are curiously mixed with tendencies derived from Cilician art.

## 21 KHORAN, f. 8

The margins of the Canon tables are decorated with figures of real and imaginary birds and animals. Such motifs were usually interpreted by the official church in terms of Christian symbolism, but here they are more likely to have been inspired by the ancient folk-art symbols.

## 22 THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 143

The scene is permeated by a profound lyricism which is felt both in the images of the characters and in the delicate colouring combining warm ochreous and green hues. The large, almond-shaped Oriental eyes impart an additional beauty to the faces, which are evocative of early Persian miniatures.

23–26

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7482)

Written in the village of Eligis by Hovhannes, 1297; illuminated at the monastery of Tatev by Grigor Tatevatsi, 1378  
Vellum, 32 × 23.5 cm, 254 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 5 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

## 23\* ST. MATTHEW, f. 11v

The Evangelist is depicted in accordance with the conventional scheme adopted at the scriptoria of Siunik – against a wall which separates the figure from the buildings seen in the background. The buildings, although schematically treated, resemble actually existing structures. The same applies to the chair on which the Evangelist is seated: similar wooden chairs are still in use in Armenian villages.

## 24 THE VIRGIN AND CHILD ENTHRONED, f. 250v

The miniature displays the monumental quality typical of many scenes in the manuscript (cf. *The Annunciation*, Pl. 25). The large-scale figure of the seated Virgin tends to fill the entire page. The deep, dark colours of her robes make a striking contrast with the pale pink tone of the background, so that the latter acquires a light airiness, in spite of the intricate ornamentation patterns.

This type of representation – a full-face frontal view of the Virgin and Child – was frequent in early Christian art and can be found in many Armenian wall reliefs of the fourth to seventh centuries.

## 25 THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 248v

The images of the Virgin and the archangel Gabriel, depicted in a soft and delicate manner, are distinguished by the beauty and spirituality of their faces. The treatment of their large, almost monumental figures shows the fine draughtsmanship and the painterly skill of the artist. The figures stand against an ornamented background enlivened in the centre by an almost realistic touch – two arches with accurately rendered masonry, and a recess with a jug between them. The latter detail hints at the setting of the event, which was supposed to have taken place by a well. At the same time the Virgin has a ball of yarn in her hand, an allusion to her upbringing in the Temple of Jerusalem where she would spin and weave the priests' vestments. The miniature, therefore, combines two iconographic versions of *The Annunciation* – *The Annunciation at the Well* (the apocryphal version) and *The Annunciation in the Temple*.

## 26 THE CRUCIFIXION, f. 252

The strict symmetry of the composition is broken by the figures of mourning angels extending beyond the frame of the scene. A certain dynamic quality is felt in the figure of St. John bending over the feet of Christ. The network of pink lines in the background resembles the binding of an earlier Tatev manuscript (now in the Etchmiadzin collection), where a similar network forms the background of the two relief-like figures representing Grigor Tatevatsi and John Vorotnetsi.



























**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7699)

14th century, the Crimea (?)

Names of scribe and illuminator unknown

Parchment, 16.5 × 12 cm, 311 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 18 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

**27\* THE BAPTISM OF THE PEOPLE, f. 20**

The miniature depicts a subject rarely occurring in Armenian book illustration, which, moreover, receives here a rather unusual treatment; the composition of the scene repeats that of the Baptism of Christ, but the traditional place of Christ is occupied here by the figure of a young man (or woman?).

28–31

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 6305)

14th century, Siunik

Written (and probably illuminated) by Grigor

Vellum, 29 × 23 cm, 284 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 23 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

**28 ST. MATTHEW, f. 71v**

Ornamentation plays a leading role in the illumination of this manuscript, being prominent even in the historiated miniatures. Here, the ornamental patterns decorate not only the background and the architectural details, but also the Evangelist's robes. The picture resembles a carpet, and this visual effect is further enhanced by the ornamental bands added to the frame and creating the impression of a carpet fringe.

**29 FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE, f. 128**

The highly decorative character of the headpiece with its magnificent carpet-like ornamentation, the stylized but at the same time very expressive representation of two peacocks, the marginal decor in the form of a vase of flowers and, finally, the ornate lettering contribute to the overall effect of joyful splendour.



27 The Baptism of the People, f. 20

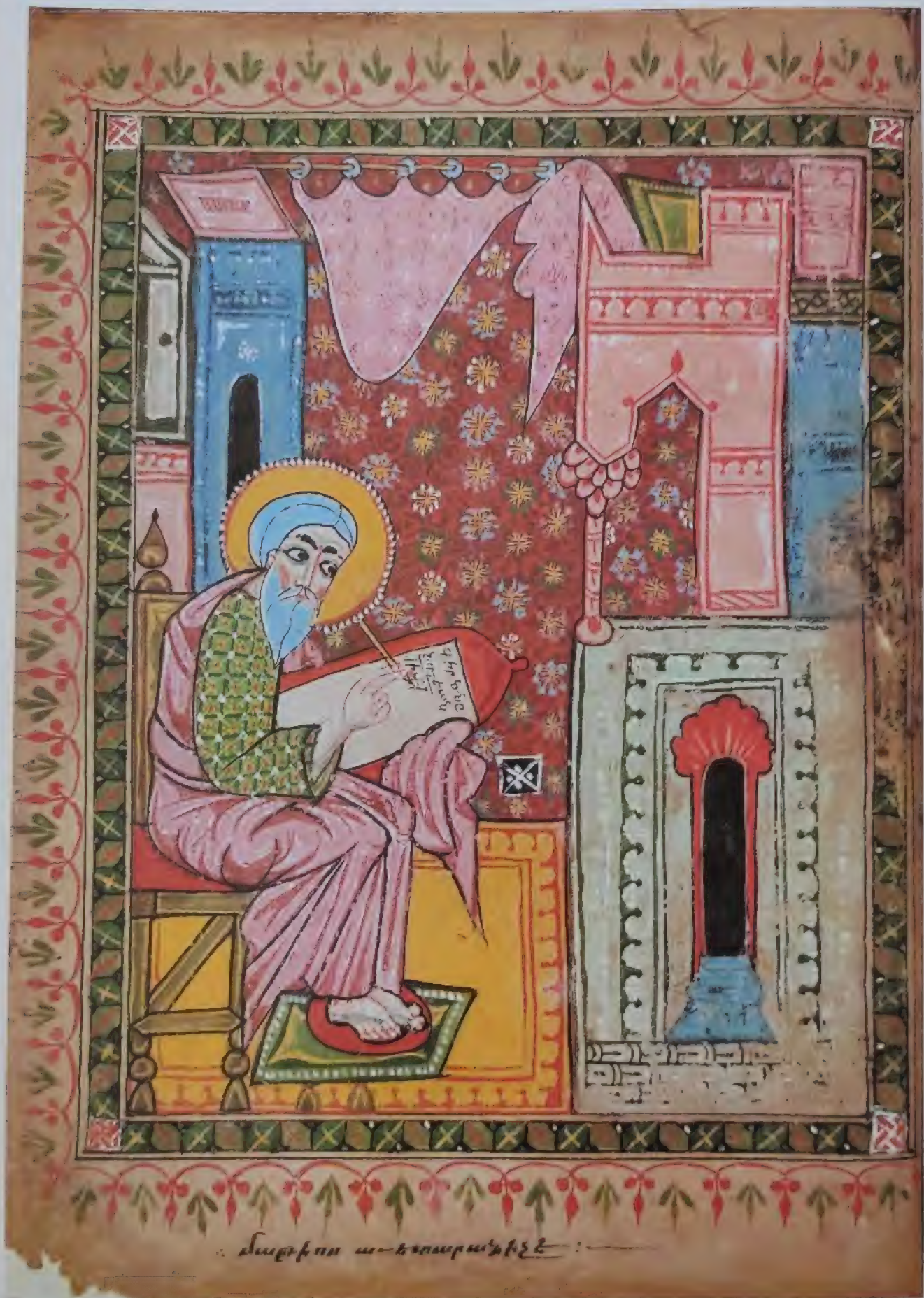
**30 THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 130v**

The miniature represents a rare iconographic version based on apocryphal sources – The Annunciation at the Well. The Virgin is shown as a young peasant woman wearing a bright-coloured dress. With the water jug upon her shoulders, she stares at the archangel in genuine surprise at this sudden appearance. The light and cheerful colouring combines with the gay floral ornamentation in imparting a joyful atmosphere to the scene.

**31 ST. GEORGE, f. 282**

Representations of St. George mounted on a horse, slaying the dragon, frequently occur in medieval art. The earliest of such representations in Armenia are to be found in the frescoes dating from the seventh century (e.g. in the churches at Talin, Ashtarak and other places).





















32 Grigor Tatevatsi Surrounded by His Pupils, f. 14v

32

**THE PSALMS AS INTERPRETED BY  
GRIGOR TATEVATSI** (Ms. 1203)

Late 14th or early 15th century (place of production and name of scribe unknown)

Illuminated by Tadeos Avraments (?)

Vellum, 18.4 × 13 cm, 386 ff.

Of the two parchment folios sewn into the already bound volume, one bears a representation of Grigor Tatevatsi.

**32 GRIGOR TATEVATSI SURROUNDED BY HIS  
PUPILS, f. 14v**

The anonymous artist must have actually met Grigor Tatevatsi, celebrated scholar, philosopher and artist, otherwise it is hard to account for the almost naturalistic details in the por-

trait, for instance the half-closed lid of the left eye, probably the result of an illness. On the whole, the portrait betrays the artist's attempt to break with the prevalent medieval tendency towards a schematic treatment of characters, depicting instead a concrete person. The portrait, which agrees with a recorded description of the scholar's appearance, was regarded at the time as an authentic likeness, painted from life. It was therefore copied by different artists over the years; some later copies have been preserved.





33 The Annunciation, f. 150  
34 The Ascension, f. 240

33, 34

# **THE GOSPELS (Ms. 318)**

14th century, the Crimea (?)  
Names of scribe and illuminator unknown  
Parchment, 21 × 14.3 cm, 312 ff.  
Portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 13 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

## **33\* THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 150**

The deliberately elongated figures and rich colouring give great expressiveness to the miniature. The artist succeeds in creating the optical effect of volume, especially in so far as the modelling of the faces is concerned. The static pose of the Virgin, struck motionless by surprise, is contrasted with the swift movement of the approaching archangel.

## **34\* THE ASCENSION, f. 240**

The essentially canonical treatment of the scene here acquires a distinctly original touch: special prominence is given to the group comprising the figures of the Virgin and the apostles, which are noticeably larger in size than the figures of Christ and the angels. The distance between the two groups is thus deliberately emphasized, symbolizing the spiritual distance between Christ and the witnesses of his miraculous ascension.





35 St. Matthew, f. 11v

35, 36

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 4060)

14th century

Place of production, names of scribe and illuminator unknown

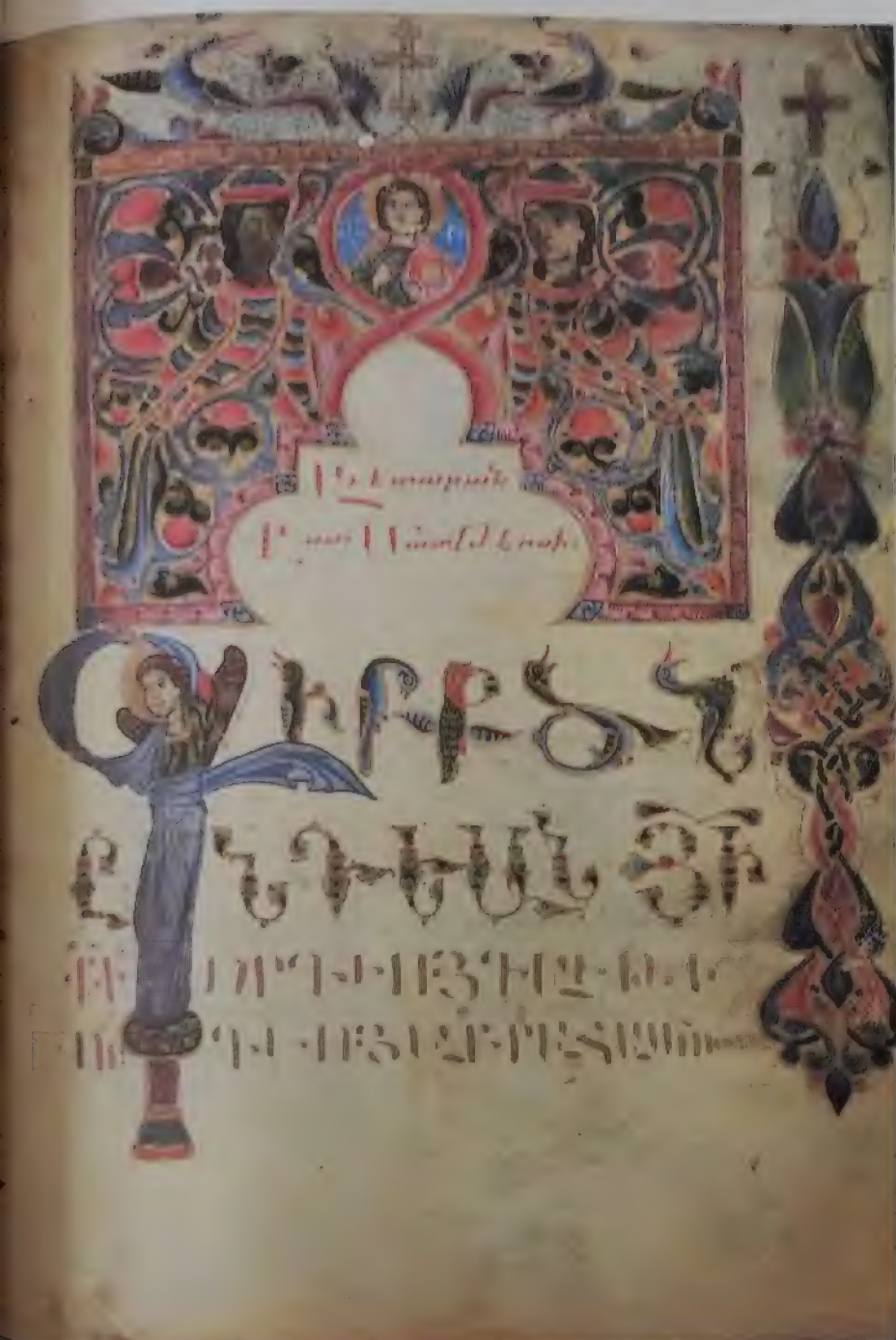
Parchment, 23.5 x 16.5 cm, 245 ff.

Portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, marginals, initials

**35\*, 36\* ST. MATTHEW, f. 11v; FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW, f. 12**

The miniatures in the manuscript betray the influence of Cilician art embracing both iconography and technique. The ample use of gold is also a distinctly Cilician feature. Certain characteristics, however, rule out the possibility of attributing the manuscript to a Cilician master. Such is, for example, the free and sweeping manner of painting resulting in a somewhat generalized treatment of forms, typical of the north-east of historical Armenia.





36 First page of the Gospel of St. Matthew, f. 12

37

#### THE GOSPELS (Ms. 2744)

1305, town of Ardjesh, Vaspurakan

Written and illuminated by Simeon Ardjishetsi

Vellum, 30.7 × 24.5 cm, 302 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 12 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

Simeon Ardjishetsi was the first to broaden the range of motifs included in the menological cycle. This pictorial cycle, with certain variations, is to be found in the Vaspurakan illuminated manuscripts up to the fifteenth century.

#### 37 THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST, f. 4

The general treatment of the scene corresponds to the iconographic tradition accepted at the time, deviating from it only in the representation of the angels, which are depicted floating in the air instead of standing on the river bank. Such an interpretation, unusual for medieval art, can be traced back to early Eastern Christian models. Closely related in this respect to the Matenadaran Gospels is the thirteenth-century Arabian manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Ms. 13).









38 The Resurrection, f. 6

38, 39

#### THE GOSPELS (Ms. 4814)

1294, town of Berkri, Vaspurakan  
Written by Hakob, illuminated by Khatcher  
Vellum, 30 × 25 cm, 266 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 5 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

#### 38\* THE RESURRECTION, f. 6

The iconography of the miniature is similar to that of the Resurrection scene in the 1038 Gospels (Ms. 6201). Its most remarkable feature is the presence of Christ risen from the dead, together with the soldiers guarding the tomb and with the Holy Women arriving at the sepulchre. A similar iconographic version, rare in Eastern Christian art, is to be found in the Simon Psalter, a Russian illuminated manuscript dating from the thirteenth century (known also as the Khludov Psalter, after its nineteenth-century owner Alexei Khludov, a Moscow merchant and collector), and also in some Syrian manuscripts. S. Der Nersessian regards this scene as an example of amalgamation of two or more motifs, typical of the Vaspurakan school.

#### 39 ST. JOHN AND ST. PROCHOROS, f. 209v

In accordance with the contemporary Vaspurakan tradition which differed from the canonical scheme, the artist depicted St. John leaning upon his staff. The representation of St. Prochoros is likewise rather unusual – he is shown not as a youth, but as a middle-aged man with a beard and moustache. On the whole, Khatcher's miniatures are remarkable for the intensity of facial expressions, unusual compositional treatment and characteristic colouring.









40 The Thirty Pieces of Silver, f. 6v

40

# THE GOSPELS (Ms. 4818)

1316, village of Azarakn, Vaspurakan

Written and illuminated by Ovsian

Vellum, 33 × 25 cm, 285 ff.

Khorans, portrait of an Evangelist, first pages, 25 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

## 40\* THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, f. 6v

Ovsian was the only fourteenth-century Vaspurakan miniaturist to have been inspired by the motif of The Remorse of Judas. The treatment of the scene, however, is in tune with the master's usual grotesque and somewhat naive manner. The setting for the figures is provided by a framework of arch-shaped ornamental bands reminiscent of an architectural construction, which, together with the rhythmically balanced arrangement of the figures, imparts a theatrical touch to the scene.

41, 42

# THE GOSPELS (Ms. 4806)

1306, village of Berdakn, Vaspurakan

Written, illuminated and bound by Ovsian

Vellum, 34 × 23 cm, 374 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 21 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

## 41\* THE DESCENT INTO LIMBO, f. 14

Ovsian is a typical representative of the "popular trend" in the Vaspurakan school of book painting. In his miniatures, the archaic models are interpreted with a rare sincerity and spontaneity. Canonical motifs are treated by the artist as if seen through the eyes of common people; here this tendency shows in the slightly naive manner in which the righteous are opposed to the sinners.

## 42 THE KISS OF JUDAS, f. 12

Just as in The Thirty Pieces of Silver by the same master (PL. 40), the treatment of the scene verges on the grotesque and at the same time is characterized by the naive directness of folk art. The ugly faces of Judas and the guards undoubtedly









43 The Nativity, f.5

ly reflect the artist's negative attitude to this group of characters. The compositional principle of the miniature consists in the strictly balanced rhythmical arrangement not only of the forms and movements of the figures, but also of the colours.

43–45

#### THE GOSPELS (Ms. 7456)

1319/20, town of Artsak, Vaspurakan

Written and illuminated by Vardan

Vellian, 32.3 × 23.5 cm, 287 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 13 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

#### 43\* THE NATIVITY, f.5

In accordance with the Vaspurakan tradition of the time, the scene in Vardan's interpretation of the Nativity is on the motif of The Adoration of the Magi. In the miniature, the Virgin and Child turn their heads to look at the approaching Magi. The laconic composition includes only the principal characters, represented against an almost blank background, with a summary indication of the setting. The drawing is both delicate and supple, and the contours are painted in light and

dark shades of blue, which gives them a dynamic vividness. The light and airy treatment of the miniature produces the impression of a water-colour.

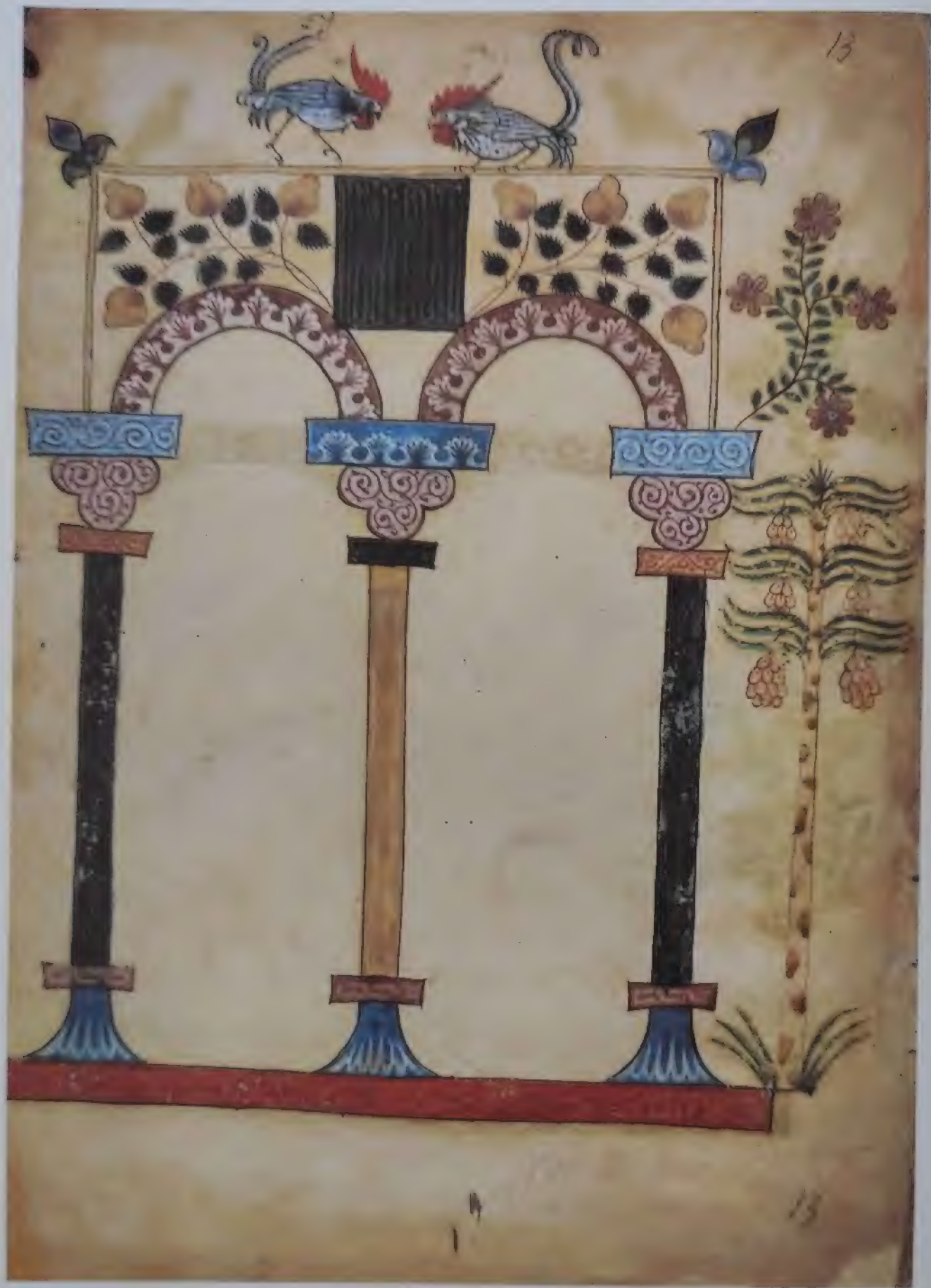
#### 44 KHORAN, f.13

The illumination of this folio presents a perfect example of decorative book design. The elegance of the lines, the skill in the treatment of delicate floral motifs and birds in the ornamentation combine with an exquisite colour range, in which azure and sky-blue tones are set off by light browns. The general effect created by the colouring is that of peace and harmony.

#### 45\* THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST, f.6

The importance of the event is emphasized by the solemn postures of the disciples standing on the river bank (in more archaic models, we usually find a group of two or three angels balancing the composition).













46 The Ascension, f. 5

47 The Four Evangelists, f. 5v



16, 47

**THE GOSPELS (Ms. 4813)**

1338, Vaspurakan

Written, illuminated and bound by Melchizedek

Vellum, 32 × 23 cm, 188 ff. (part of the manuscript missing)

Khoran, portraits of the Evangelists, 8 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

**46\* THE ASCENSION, f. 5**

The composition is based on an archaic iconographic model found in Armenian wall-reliefs and gravestones of the fourth to seventh centuries, in which Christ is also depicted in a mandorla supported by the angels.

**47 THE FOUR EVANGELISTS, f. 5v**

The artist's predilection for archaic models is manifested in this group of the Four Evangelists. The arrangement of the figures standing four abreast is characteristic of tenth- and eleventh-century Armenian manuscripts. The emphasized linear quality of the miniature and the general symmetry and regularity of the drawing and colouring enable the artist to strike an original note in the treatment of the subject. There is no doubt that Melchizedek was a highly gifted artist and a prominent figure in Armenian medieval art.

48

**THE GOSPELS (Ms. 3717)**

1392, town of Khizan, Vaspurakan

Written by Petros, illuminated by Hovhannes Khizanetsi

Vellum, 27 × 18.5 cm, 329 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 14 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

**48\* THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM; CHRIST WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET, f. 12**

Two scenes placed together on one page are a traditional feature of Vaspurakan illuminated manuscripts. The miniatures are remarkable for the emotional dynamism of their composition and for the keen and expressive eyes and animated features of the characters, depicted in the lively and unrestrained manner of folk art. They also demonstrate the remarkable skill of the artist who was an accomplished miniaturist, as well as a fine draughtsman and a perfect colourist.

49

**THE GOSPELS (Ms. 7629)**

1397, town of Khizan, Vaspurakan

Written and illuminated by Hrstakes

Vellum, 27.5 × 18.5 cm, 267 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 20 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

**49\* THE HEALING OF THE DEMONIAK; THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, f. 4v**

Again, we have here two scenes illustrating the miracles of Christ – a motif extremely popular with Vaspurakan miniaturists – placed together on one page.

The miniatures of Hrstakes are usually stylized to such an extent that the forms of the figures, the folds of their garments, the details of the setting, etc. are subordinated to the all-important linear effect and are therefore perceived as purely ornamental details. At the same time, in spite of the limited palette, composed mainly of green and red with occasional additions of blue and brown, his miniatures impress one by the harmony of their colouring and the skilfully balanced composition.

50

**THE GOSPELS (Ms. 6402)**

1377, town of Aghtamar, Vaspurakan

Written by Avag, illuminated by Zachariah Aghtamartsi

Vellum, 24 × 17.5 cm, 348 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 1 full-page historiated miniature, numerous miniatures incorporated into the text, marginals, initials

The Matenadaran collection includes thirteen manuscripts illuminated by Zachariah Aghtamartsi between 1354 and 1403.

The design of the book is unusual for the Armenian illuminated manuscripts in that the miniatures are incorporated into the text, sometimes taking up more than a half of the page.

**50\* THE ENTOMBMENT, f. 153**

The miniature presents a laconic version of the scene, with only the principal figures depicted. They are placed against a blank background, devoid of any decorative elements or details of setting.













Կոչեցեալ առինքն և  
 Վհարիր ապետն և  
 հարց զնա և ասե, թէ  
 արդարեւ այն չափ  
 Վաղ մեռաւ և իբրեւ

աստուգեաց ի հարիւ  
 րապետն անտի. շն  
 որհեաց զմարմին  
 և յովսէփա :  
 Ե յովսէփի գնեա

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51 The Annunciation, f. 5v  
52 The Transfiguration, f. 7

51, 52

#### THE GOSPELS (Ms. 2929)

1330, village of Urunkar, Vaspurakan  
Written by Stepanos, illuminated by Kirakos  
Vellum, 32 × 23.5 cm, 321 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 6 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

The name of Kirakos is associated with the appearance of a new trend in the Vaspurakan school of book painting. The main distinctive feature characterizing works by Kirakos and his followers consists in the emphasis on linear treatment.

#### 51\* THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 5v

The clarity of the composition is combined here with the emotional intensity of the images. One's attention is drawn to the expression of spontaneous, almost childlike excitement in the eyes of the Virgin and Gabriel. The miniature is executed in the light manner reminiscent of a water-colour, special importance being assigned to linear effects.

#### 52\* THE TRANSFIGURATION, f. 7

The Transfiguration was one of the favourite and most widespread motifs in the illuminated Gospels of Vaspurakan. Kirakos chooses a laconic version which includes only the principal participants in the event: Christ standing between Moses and Elijah and the apostles lying prostrate before the vision. The artist's palette is likewise limited, consisting of only a few pure colours. Characteristically, all this enhances the dramatic eloquence of the composition.





53 The Marriage at Cana, f. 7

53-55

### THE GOSPELS (Ms. 8772)

1391, town of Aghtamar, Vaspurakan

Written by Aristakes, illuminated by Tserun

Vellum, 15.5 x 11.5 cm, 275 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, self-portrait of the illuminator, portrait of the donor (Grigor), marginals, initials

Tserun belongs to a group of Vaspurakan artists whose work was entirely based on and inspired by the local traditions of book illumination. Tserun had numerous pupils and followers, so that the term "Tserunian style" came to be adopted in specialist literature.

#### 53\* THE MARRIAGE AT CANA, f. 7

The traditional Gospel scene is supplemented with details from real life, based on the artist's own experience. Such are,

for example, the wine jars in the lower part of the picture. Their shape and decor were undoubtedly suggested by the clay vessels used in Vaspurakan homes at the time.

#### 54\* CHRIST WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET, f. 11

It is noteworthy that despite the stylized character of the drawing the artist succeeded in rendering the varied postures and gestures of the apostles and in conveying their different facial expressions.

#### 55\* PORTRAIT OF THE DONOR AND HIS SON, f. 17

The miniature is composed according to the isoccephalic principle, a feature typical of Tserun's style. The painting is also remarkable for the accuracy with which the artist depicted costumes and furniture. In contrast to the majority of Vaspurakan illuminators, Tserun prefers life models to imaginary ones, although when depicting real people he treats them in a summary manner.





- 34 Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet, f. 11  
 35 Portrait of the Donor and His Son, f. 17



56

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 5332)

1357, town of Aghtamar, Vaspurakan

Written by Karapet, illuminated by Zachariah Aghtamartsi  
Vellum, 27 × 18 cm, 276 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 13 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

## 56 THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, f. 5

The miniature ranks among the best works by Zachariah, which are distinguished for their completeness of form, for their balance of drawing and colour, for their bright colours and, finally, for their general decorativeness.

57–59

**THE BIBLE** (Ms. 346)

1390–1400, town of Khizan, Vaspurakan

Written by Petros, Hovhannes and Melchized, illuminated by Hovhannes Khizanetsi

Vellum, 28 × 18.5 cm, 560 ff.

Title-pages, 3 full-page historiated miniatures, portrait of the donor, self-portrait of the illuminator, marginals, initials

## 57\*, 58\* PAGES WITH ORNAMENTAL BORDERS, ff. 519v, 456

The Khizan Bible stands out among all other Vaspurakan manuscripts thanks to its exceptionally rich marginal ornamentation. Here, more than in any other of his works, Hovhannes Khizanetsi shows himself to be a brilliant master of decorative book design.

## 59\* THE VIRGIN AND CHILD, f. 441v

The miniature is placed below the rather modestly decorated Canon tables occupying the top of the page. Kneeling before the Virgin and the Infant Christ are the donors who commissioned the work. The dark and saturated colours of the miniatures are enlivened by the bright red hues of the Virgin's robe and cloak. The dress and facial types of the donors are of considerable interest with regard to ethnography and history of costume.

60, 61

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 3722)

1304, town of Nakhitchevan

Written by Hakob, illuminated and bound by Simeon  
Vellum, 33 × 27 cm, 364 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, marginals, initials

## 60\* KHORAN, f. 7

The decor of the manuscript is to a great extent based on the ancient traditions of Armenian art: apart from its purely decorative role, the ornamentation includes various meaningful symbols. The usual khoran pattern (the arch-shaped framework and ornamental columns) is often replaced by intricate ornamental headpieces in which floral motifs are combined with figures of animals and human faces, incorporated into the general decorative pattern.

## 61\* THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, f. 77

Numerous marginal illustrations in the manuscript make up for the absence of full-page historiated miniatures. As a rule, the Gospel episodes are represented by fragments or key symbols corresponding to certain scenes or motifs. Thus, a chalice symbolizes the Baptism, a shepherd blowing a pipe – the Nativity, etc. The Entry into Jerusalem is one of the few scenes presented in greater detail than the rest. The miniature is placed in the right outer margin, elements of the composition intruding between the lines. The whole page thus creates an impression of compositional integrity, in which the text and the illustration naturally supplement and visually support each other.







այլ, փրկվեալսն արեւելոց և  
Ծագից մերոյ և ապրիւն քեզ  
գիտաբան ցեաւարանից մե-  
տա տանն եկեղեցւոյդ,  
հաջնելեալ աղօթեալ  
մերսն և ետե՛ր յիշե՛ն: Թ:

Թանգարտիւս աշոն եղայր՝ Եւթոթոսան  
 ակ եղեցեսոր՝ հաներ զաղիսրեմէք՝ յու  
 սացեալ ի հնազանդո՝ Եղթոյեւեառքեւ  
 քնիզիսեմէ՝ Քառասեւեալքանդոր ա  
 սեմո՝ ամսիցես՝ միանգամայն ետարտաս  
 տեսիլիո ինձ վանս՝ քնի՝ յուսամ, ելԾե  
 աղժԾիւք ձերովք շարհեցայց ձեւ՝  
 Եղջոյնսայ ձեւ եփա փրեաս պերեկից  
 իմ իքնյմեւ մարկոս, և արիս տարբոս՝  
 և դեմաս, և զուսասպ՝ Ծակից իմ՝ Շնոր  
 հք տնյիքե լըոպայոր ձերում, ամեն:

ԲԵՆԵԴԻԿԵՆ  
 ԳԵԿԵ ԵՆԿԱՐԻ ՍՈՒԲԵՐՈՎՆ  
 ՎԳԻՐԱՎՈՐՈՒՄԱՄԱՔԵՆՆ ՅՈՐԻՆԵՆ  
 Լ՝ՈՒԿԱՀԱՍՐՆ (ՁԵՐԿՄԱՏԺՈՒՔ  
 ԵՂԲԱՐՍԴՆԵՐՈՅ: յՈՐՈՅ ԵԱՄԵՆ Ե  
 ՅՈՒՆՅ ՉՈՒՂԱՐՐՆ ԵՆԵՄԻՐԱՆԵՍԻՆՈՅ ՀԱՅ  
 ԳԵՆԸ ՎԵՐԱՂՈՒԹՅՈՐՈՎՆԵՐԻՆԻՑԻՆ ԳՎԵ  
 ԸՆՆԵՆԱԶԵՐ ԸՍՏԻՄ ԸՆԴՈՒՆԻՅԻՄ: ԸՆԴՁ  
 ԲԻՆԱԿԵՅԱՆԻՐԲԵՍԱՅԱ ԵՆԿԱՐԱՐԱՑ ԱՅՈՐԻ  
 ՆԱԿԱՅ ՈՐԿԱՄՅԱՐԿԵՆԱ ՎՐՈՑԱՐՐՈՆՎԱՄ  
 ԻՆԻՆԵՆԱՅ ԻՐՈՎՆԵՆՈՒՑՎԱՐՈՒՄԸ: (ՁԵՐԿՈՒՄ  
 ԵՂԲԱՐՍԴՆԵՐ ԵՆՆԵՆՈՒՑՎԱՐՈՒՄԸ  
 ԻՐՈՎՈՒՄ ԵՂԲԱՐՍԴՆԵՐԻՆԵՍՈՒՑ  
 ԱՅՈՐԻՆԵՆՈՒՑՎԱՐՈՒՄԸ ԵՂԲԱՐՍԴՆԵՐ  
 ՆԱԿԱՅ ՎԵՐԱՂՈՒԹՅՈՐՈՎՆԵՐԻՆԵՍՈՒՑ  
 ՆԱԿԱՅ ՎԵՐԱՂՈՒԹՅՈՐՈՎՆԵՐԻՆԵՍՈՒՑ  
 ՆԱԿԱՅ ՎԵՐԱՂՈՒԹՅՈՐՈՎՆԵՐԻՆԵՍՈՒՑ

[illegible]

որ ամենեղապօղոսի հոտին յաշին  
անունն էր իմեղե որկոչ էր սեբաստանն  
Եւ ինքն իմեղական և արիւտարբոս և նաւ  
էր անորոս և նուապիւ և ինքն և նաւ իմեղե  
մէ և զիւստոս և նաւ արիւտարբոս և նաւ  
բայիւս և նաւ իմեղե և նաւ իմեղե և նաւ





የፋይናንስ ሚኒስቴር

սխալեալ զգրեալ է երեսի մասը զարդէ: աս հարաւոր  
 ինկաւստ-արքեմիզ հրեշտակեմաւ ամի բոլոր հմե  
 ղեր ձեռքէ զհաւատարար հարաւոր ամի բոլոր:

Եւ յայնպէս արարեալ զամենայն զոյն զայն արարեալսն ի  
 Եւրոպիոյն զԵմեալապոլսոն, եւ զԵփեսոսոն, եւ զ  
 շատ խոյն, որոնք = **Ը** եղև զիյոյսմանսն սկսեալ  
 էր, յամենայնօրէն, եւ քարոզելովն արտու (Թեապա  
 շիաւորութիւն) Թողու (Թեանդապ) = **Է** եղև այդ  
 արարեալսն զիւստանսն, եւ եմացիք ամենեկին  
 սկսեալսն ի ստանսն, որոնք անստանսն իստանսն

Եւ իմեալ զսեղանորեանց = Եւ եղբորսմանս և  
զսեղանայտեալս զսեղանս և զսեղանայտեալս  
Եւ իմեալ զսեղանայտեալս և իմեալ զսեղանայտեալս  
Եւ իմեալ զսեղանայտեալս և իմեալ զսեղանայտեալս

Բանալիս Կիւիւն որոս մէջմբաւ ահանելաժող  
արհել լաւ ծանօն գիտացնիւա շահցորոս =  
Էսանկրտեցիցը ձէջըրով և նսանկրտեցիւ ձէշը

զայնուհետեւ = Բ- եղև յառաջագոյն  
 սկի. Եկցմք նապարհ Ը գ ալիէացողս մկրտե  
 ջաւ հյդանսին հյորշ անաս = Բ- նոյնժամայ  
 ն ընդ վերանալի. շրջակ տեսցելեալ գերկնիստ

Հայերեւելիկից առէ՝ դո՛ւ ետորդեմաներէ  
վըրդ չեղհանեցաք։ Եւ այն ժամայն հողին  
հանէ զսպարտասպառ։ Եւ երես մտօ զատ ուր

Գրաւարտ. Կոթործեալիս աստուայի = 11-եր  
 Կաշիւք-դ ազատաւ. Եւ հրեշտակք պաշտե  
 ինչոյս =  
 Եւ ինքեանսն ի բնութեանս Եկեղեցիս

[illegible]

$\begin{matrix} \text{d} & \text{f} & \text{g} & \text{h} & \text{i} & \text{k} & \text{l} & \text{m} & \text{n} & \text{o} & \text{p} & \text{q} & \text{r} & \text{s} & \text{t} & \text{u} & \text{v} & \text{w} & \text{x} & \text{y} & \text{z} \\ \text{a} & \text{b} & \text{c} & \text{d} & \text{e} & \text{f} & \text{g} & \text{h} & \text{i} & \text{j} & \text{k} & \text{l} & \text{m} & \text{n} & \text{o} & \text{p} & \text{q} & \text{r} & \text{s} & \text{t} & \text{u} & \text{v} & \text{w} & \text{x} & \text{y} & \text{z} \end{matrix}$

|                 |                 |                            |                            |               |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| $\mathcal{F}_n$ | $\mathcal{F}$   | $\mathcal{F}_{\text{max}}$ | $\mathcal{F}_{\text{min}}$ | $\mathcal{F}$ |
| $\mathcal{F}_n$ | $\mathcal{F}_n$ | $\mathcal{F}_n$            | $\mathcal{F}_n$            |               |
| $\mathcal{F}_n$ |                 |                            |                            |               |

ասեղաշարտեմնի գիտակեանքնոցստե-  
կանս, ինչոք քանակ ձկնորդք եւեւ է. ասե-  
ղոսաս. եկողք գրկեմ. եւ արարելոյ ձկն  
որսողք սմարդ. կան է. Ժողովարանի Ընդ

գրուեալսն զայցիս զՀեռնորաւ Դիւան  
տոյցեալսն յաւան ի իմեալսն եւ իւր  
կորսն զիւրեք եւս զյուսնսն եւ իւր  
և զիւրսնսն և իւրսնսն եւ իւրսնսն

կոչեաց զհոռաւ: Եւ վարժարանի Թողեալ զհոյս  
 Եւ ի բնակց զեք երբ որեւիտաւ: Բն վարժակաւս զն  
 Հանդերձ զհազարս զհանդուս: Եւ  
 Եւ զհանդերձ զհազարս զհանդուս: Եւ զհանդերձ զհազարս զհանդուս:

Իսկ իշարած տնտեսալէժողութորդն  
ուսուցաներ զնոսս = Եւ զարմանային ընդ զար  
դապետս = Ընկորս, զի ուսուցաներ զնոսս իբ  
րեւ իշխանս = Ընկն կորդայն զայրքս = Եւ

երէն յող + սկզբ եւանել շոյաւայրով յորտմայ ա  
սկիւծ գրքին մեա որ աշարակեացի ասե լոյ՛ւ  
տութ զեկայմերեւ քոյաւ սաղմուցի եկիր հոր  
ուսանել զմեղ գիտեմք զ քեզ ունաւ շոյաւ սա

տառայնության ասե՛կարկեացի եկե՛մանը = Եւ  
 զարկայց վառայնայեղծ և աղաղակեացի ձայն  
 մեծ և եկեմանսն = Եւ զարկացն ամենեւեկիս  
 միջև և հեծեղ ընդ միմեանսն ասե՛կ զից է

այսնոր վարդապետուն ընդ ինչխանութեան  
այսոց արծոց տասնութ հազարս քանակս  
էլ յորտաւարդանմուղն գալիլէացոց  
վարդապետական ժողովոց անհն, եկն

Իտալու նահանգի և անդրեայ յակոբ աւելյոհան  
 նուհանդերձ Եւ զգրման սիմոնի դսեր  
 ջերմացեալ և վաղվաղակէ ասեմնցաւ ի տրաւ  
 Եւ մատուցեալ յարդոյ զնաւ կայալ գծեաւ

Եւ արդարեւ եւ իմոց գնաւ տեսարեւ. Եւ պաշտեց ինքեան  
 Եւ իբրեւ երեկոյն զԵւ իմոսմեկ արեգակ հանաքեւ  
 զի իմ առ-նա զհանգիւս անցաւ և զգիւս անհաքաւ. Եւ  
 իմոց, քաղաքս ինքոսմեայս առ-նա անաւ. Եւ

[illegible]

Էն գրաց յանապատ տեղի. և անդ  
Կայրաղօքս. Եւ գրացին զհետորս սինն  
և որդիք. անյոյն իւ. Եւ իբրեւ գտնեցն ասան  
իւ. Եւ անիւ և անիւ. զիւր յիւ. Եւ ասիւ.

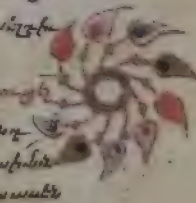
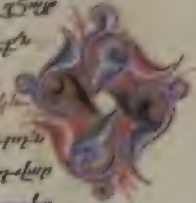
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ԳԼԵ աղտոտու առաջադասութիւն  
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ԳԼԵ աղտոտու առաջադասութիւն  
 բոլորով աղտոտութիւնը մտնելով  
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185 | 186 | 187 | 188 | 189 | 190 | 191 | 192 | 193 | 194 | 195 | 196 | 197 | 198 | 199 | 200 | 201 | 202 | 203 | 204 | 205 | 206 | 207 | 208 | 209 | 210 | 211 | 212 | 213 | 214 | 215 | 216 | 217 | 218 | 219 | 220 | 221 | 222 | 223 | 224 | 225 | 226 | 227 | 228 | 229 | 230 | 231 | 232 | 233 | 234 | 235 | 236 | 237 | 238 | 239 | 240 | 241 | 242 | 243 | 244 | 245 | 246 | 247 | 248 | 249 | 250 | 251 | 252 | 253 | 254 | 255 | 256 | 257 | 258 | 259 | 260 | 261 | 262 | 263 | 264 | 265 | 266 | 267 | 268 | 269 | 270 | 271 | 272 | 273 | 274 | 275 | 276 | 277 | 278 | 279 | 280 | 281 | 282 | 283 | 284 | 285 | 286 | 287 | 288 | 289 | 290 | 291 | 292 | 293 | 294 | 295 | 296 | 297 | 298 | 299 | 300 | 301 | 302 | 303 | 304 | 305 | 306 | 307 | 308 | 309 | 310 | 311 | 312 | 313 | 314 | 315 | 316 | 317 | 318 | 319 | 320 | 321 | 322 | 323 | 324 | 325 | 326 | 327 | 328 | 329 | 330 | 331 | 332 | 333 | 334 | 335 | 336 | 337 | 338 | 339 | 340 | 341 | 342 | 343 | 344 | 345 | 346 | 347 | 348 | 349 | 350 | 351 | 352 | 353 | 354 | 355 | 356 | 357 | 358 | 359 | 360 | 361 | 362 | 363 | 364 | 365 | 366 | 367 | 368 | 369 | 370 | 371 | 372 | 373 | 374 | 375 | 376 | 377 | 378 | 379 | 380 | 381 | 382 | 383 | 384 | 385 | 386 | 387 | 388 | 389 | 390 | 391 | 392 | 393 | 394 | 395 | 396 | 397 | 398 | 399 | 400 | 401 | 402 | 403 | 404 | 405 | 406 | 407 | 408 | 409 | 410 | 411 | 412 | 413 | 414 | 415 | 416 | 417 | 418 | 419 | 420 | 421 | 422 | 423 | 424 | 425 | 426 | 427 | 428 | 429 | 430 | 431 | 432 | 433 | 434 | 435 | 436 | 437 | 438 | 439 | 440 | 441 | 442 | 443 | 444 | 445 | 446 | 447 | 448 | 449 | 450 | 451 | 452 | 453 | 454 | 455 | 456 | 457 | 458 | 459 | 460 | 461 | 462 | 463 | 464 | 465 | 466 | 467 | 468 | 469 | 470 | 471 | 472 | 473 | 474 | 475 | 476 | 477 | 478 | 479 | 480 | 481 | 482 | 483 | 484 | 485 | 486 | 487 | 488 | 489 | 490 | 491 | 492 | 493 | 494 | 495 | 496 | 497 | 498 | 499 | 500 | 501 | 502 | 503 | 504 | 505 | 506 | 507 | 508 | 509 | 510 | 511 | 512 | 513 | 514 | 515 | 516 | 517 | 518 | 519 | 520 | 521 | 522 | 523 | 524 | 525 | 526 | 527 | 528 | 529 | 530 | 531 | 532 | 533 | 534 | 535 | 536 | 537 | 538 | 539 | 540 | 541 | 542 | 543 | 544 | 545 | 546 | 547 | 548 | 549 | 550 | 551 | 552 | 553 | 554 | 555 | 556 | 557 | 558 | 559 | 560 | 561 | 562 | 563 | 564 | 565 | 566 | 567 | 568 | 569 | 570 | 571 | 572 | 573 | 574 | 575 | 576 | 577 | 578 | 579 | 580 | 581 | 582 | 583 | 584 | 585 | 586 | 587 | 588 | 589 | 590 | 591 | 592 | 593 | 594 | 595 | 596 | 597 | 598 | 599 | 600 | 601 | 602 | 603 | 604 | 605 | 606 | 607 | 608 | 609 | 610 | 611 | 612 | 613 | 614 | 615 | 616 | 617 | 618 | 619 | 620 | 621 | 622 | 623 | 624 | 625 | 626 | 627 | 628 | 629 | 630 | 631 | 632 | 633 | 634 | 635 | 636 | 637 | 638 | 639 | 640 | 641 | 642 | 643 | 644 | 645 | 646 | 647 | 648 | 649 | 650 | 651 | 652 | 653 | 654 | 655 | 656 | 657 | 658 | 659 | 660 | 661 | 662 | 663 | 664 | 665 | 666 | 667 | 668 | 669 | 670 | 671 | 672 | 673 | 674 | 675 | 676 | 677 | 678 | 679 | 680 | 681 | 682 | 683 | 684 | 685 | 686 | 687 | 688 | 689 | 690 | 691 | 692 | 693 | 694 | 695 | 696 | 697 | 698 | 699 | 700 | 701 | 702 | 703 | 704 | 705 | 706 | 707 | 708 | 709 | 710 | 711 | 712 | 713 | 714 | 715 | 716 | 717 | 718 | 719 | 720 | 721 | 722 | 723 | 724 | 725 | 726 | 727 | 728 | 729 | 730 | 731 | 732 | 733 | 734 | 735 | 736 | 737 | 738 | 739 | 740 | 741 | 742 | 743 | 744 | 745 | 746 | 747 | 748 | 749 | 750 | 751 | 752 | 753 | 754 | 755 | 756 | 757 | 758 | 759 | 760 | 761 | 762 | 763 | 764 | 765 | 766 | 767 | 768 | 769 | 770 | 771 | 772 | 773 | 774 | 775 | 776 | 777 | 778 | 779 | 780 | 781 | 782 | 783 | 784 | 785 | 786 | 787 | 788 | 789 | 790 | 791 | 792 | 793 | 794 | 795 | 796 | 797 | 798 | 799 | 800 | 801 | 802 | 803 | 804 | 805 | 806 | 807 | 808 | 809 | 810 | 811 | 812 | 813 | 814 | 815 | 816 | 817 | 818 | 819 | 820 | 821 | 822 | 823 | 824 | 825 | 826 | 827 | 828 | 829 | 830 | 831 | 832 | 833 | 834 | 835 | 836 | 837 | 838 | 839 | 840 | 841 | 842 | 843 | 844 | 845 | 846 | 847 | 848 | 849 | 850 | 851 | 852 | 853 | 854 | 855 | 856 | 857 | 858 | 859 | 860 | 861 | 862 | 863 | 864 | 865 | 866 | 867 | 868 | 869 | 870 | 871 | 872 | 873 | 874 | 875 | 876 | 877 | 878 | 879 | 880 | 881 | 882 | 883 | 884 | 885 | 886 | 887 | 888 | 889 | 890 | 891 | 892 | 893 | 894 | 895 | 896 | 897 | 898 | 899 | 900 | 901 | 902 | 903 | 904 | 905 | 906 | 907 | 908 | 909 | 910 | 911 | 912 | 913 | 914 | 915 | 916 | 917 | 918 | 919 | 920 | 921 | 922 | 923 | 924 | 925 | 926 | 927 | 928 | 929 | 930 | 931 | 932 | 933 | 934 | 935 | 936 | 937 | 938 | 939 | 940 | 941 | 942 | 943 | 944 | 945 | 946 | 947 | 948 | 949 | 950 | 951 | 952 | 953 | 954 | 955 | 956 | 957 | 958 | 959 | 960 | 961 | 962 | 963 | 964 | 965 | 966 | 967 | 968 | 969 | 970 | 971 | 972 | 973 | 974 | 975 | 976 | 977 | 978 | 979 | 980 | 981 | 982 | 983 | 984 | 985 | 986 | 987 | 988 | 989 | 990 | 991 | 992 | 993 | 994 | 995 | 996 | 997 | 998 | 999 | 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-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**Ո**րպէս որդի մա  
 րդոյ ոչ եկն պա  
 շտանառնող,  
 այլ պաշտել և տա  
 ւ զանձն իւր փրկ  
 անս փոխանակ  
 բազմաց.  
**Ե**ւելանելն  
 նոցա յերեքովե  
 ցնացին զհետն  
 որա ժողովոյ որդի  
 բազումք.  
 Եւ հա կոյրքերկ  
 ու նստէին առ  
 ճանապարհամն,  
 իբրև լուանէ թէ  
 յսանցանէ. աղ

մ. զ. զ. յ.  
 մ. զ. զ. զ. զ.  
 մ. զ. զ. զ. զ.

աղակեցին և աս  
 են. ողորմեացմ  
 եզ յսորդի դամ  
 ի. և ամբոսն ասա  
 տեացն ոցա զի  
 լուեցին. եւ ն  
 ոքա և ասառաւել  
 աղաղակէին և  
 ասէին. տրողո  
 րեացմեզ որդի  
 դամի.  
**Չ**տեղի առ յս կո  
 չեաց զնոս և  
 ասէ. զինչ կա  
 իք զհարարից ձ  
 եզ. ասենցնա.  
 տրդիբացցին աչ  
 քսեր.





62, 63

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 2930)

1315, Khordeants monastery, Nakhichevan  
Written by Thomas, illuminated by Markare  
Vellum, 31 × 24 cm, 247 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 15 full-page historiated miniatures, portraits of the scribe and owner of the manuscript, marginals, initials

**62 THE CRUCIFIXION, f. 11v**

In accordance with an ancient iconographic tradition the body of Christ on the Cross is erect (with unbended knees) and his head is only very slightly inclined to one side. The Virgin and St. John are represented as two almost identical figures: both their dress and their attitudes are alike. At the same time their symmetrical positions on either side of the Cross and the dark colour of their garments, which sets them off emphatically against the neutral background, contribute to the atmosphere of grave solemnity created by the miniature.

**63\* THE RESURRECTION, f. 8v**

The treatment of the scene is characterized by an economy of pictorial devices. Curiously enough, a somewhat schematic approach to the treatment of figures is combined with an almost realistic rendering of the masonry in the sepulchre. Another interesting feature concerns the figures of the risen Christ and the angel blowing a trumpet, rarely found together in Armenian miniatures on this subject.

64, 65

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 4823)

1224, Khoranashat monastery, Artsakh  
Names of scribe and illuminator unknown  
Parchment, 36 × 26 cm, 319 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, marginals, initials

**64 ST. JOHN AND ST. PROCHOROS, f. 247v**

A skilful and imaginative ornamentalist, the artist seems to be less at ease as far as the figural scenes are concerned. His figures are rather schematic and disproportionate. These limitations, however, are made up for by the dynamic movements, expressive eyes and the slightly abstract and aloof aspect of the figures presented against a gold background, without any details of the setting.

**65\* KHORAN, f. 6**

The manuscript is remarkable for the exceptional beauty of its decor. In modelling the ornamental patterns the artist uses soft pure colours and a broad range of tonal gradations. Even though the repertoire of decorative motifs is somewhat limited, their intricate combinations are extremely varied.

66, 67

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 378)

Before 1261, Artsakh  
Written and illuminated by Toros  
Parchment, 34 × 24 cm, 311 ff.

Khorans, two portraits of the Evangelists (the other two are missing), first pages, 1 full-page historiated miniature, marginals, initials

**66 THE VIRGIN AND CHILD, THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL AND TWO APOSTLES, f. 5**

The only full-page miniature in the book is probably a later addition dating from the end of the thirteenth century or thereabouts. The Virgin is depicted wearing the bright multi-coloured dress and kerchief of Armenian peasant girls – a feature which imparts an unofficial touch to the otherwise austere composition.

**67\* FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, f. 259**

The key role in the decor of the folio is assigned to the headpiece representing The Ascension. The artist chooses a laconic version of the scene based on an archaic iconographic canon. The mandorla with Christ in the centre of the composition is supported by four angels who are the only witnesses of the miracle: neither the Virgin nor the apostles are present.





in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen  
The Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the lamentation of the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Apostle





Երբ արեւմտեան կողմէն ընդարձակեալ զգետնսն ի յայտնեալ  
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68 First page of the Gospel of St. Luke, f. 301

68

# THE GOSPELS (Ms. 4023)

13th–14th centuries

Origin and names of scribe and illuminator unknown

Vellum, 22.5 × 15 cm, 316 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, marginals, initials

## 68\* FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE, f. 301

Historiated miniatures are very rarely included into ornamental headpieces; this is just such an exception from the general rule. The representation of the Virgin is close to the *Mater Amabilis* type and has an affinity with Toros Taronatsi's miniature on the same subject (Ms. 206).





69 The Last Supper, f. 11

69-71

# **THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 316)

13th-14th centuries, Artsakh

Names of scribe and illuminator unknown

Vellum, 21.5 x 15 cm, 216 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 14-full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

## **69 THE LAST SUPPER, f. 11**

The iconography of the scene can be traced to early Christian, particularly Syrian and Coptic antecedents. This especially

refers to the round shape of the table (which also occurs in the Rabula Gospels, A.D. 586, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. 107, and in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Syrian manuscripts). The large ornate cross on the table, represented instead of the usual viands, symbolizes the Sacrifice of Christ.

The unorthodox iconography of the miniature determined to a certain extent the treatment of the images and compositional elements: in accordance with the basic principle of ornamental art, the key role is assigned to linear rhythm and colour.





70 The Annunciation, f. 2v

## 70\* THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 2v

The miniature is remarkable for its iconography: while the archangel descending from Heaven with widely spread wings is a familiar figure in early Christian art, the archangel blowing a shepherd's pipe occurs rarely. Similar examples can be found in some manuscripts from Siunik, Tatev and Nakhitchevan.

## 71\* THE NATIVITY, f. 3

The composition of the scene is based on an archaic iconographic model current both in the early Christian art of Byzantium and in medieval European painting. The Virgin is depicted sitting beside the cradle. The face looming near it represents Eve, whose appearance in the scene of The Nativity symbolizes redemption of the original sin. The same implication is probably attached to a miniature from a thirteenth-century Greek Gospel manuscript (Paris, Musée National, Ms. 543), where the motif of The Fall is accompanied by the motif of The Nativity.







72, 73

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 4820)

13th century

Origin and scribe unknown; illuminated and bound by Hovhannes

Vellum, 33 × 26.5 cm, 320 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists (later addition), first pages, 8 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

**72 THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE, f. 1v**

The twelve partridges crowning the temple symbolize the Apostles. Contrary to the predominant iconographic convention the Infant Christ is depicted as stepping forward to meet St. Simeon. A similar archaic treatment is to be found in a carved ivory diptych dating from the seventh or eighth century in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The ornamentation decorating the pillars and the dome of the temple plays a key role in the miniature.

**73 THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, f. 3**

The subject is treated according to the archaic principle of preserving the chronological sequence of events: the four consecutive stages of the miracle are represented in the miniature one after another.

74–76

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 6319)

13th–14th centuries (miniatures)

Origin and names of scribe and illuminator unknown

Vellum, 26.5 × 17.5 cm, 250 ff.

The Gospel manuscript copied in the fifteenth century was later supplemented with eight folios containing thirteenth- or fourteenth-century miniatures on Old and New Testament subjects.

**74 THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, f. 3**

The motif of The Flight into Egypt is rarely found in Armenian illuminated manuscripts, being totally absent from manuscripts produced in Vaspurakan and Siunik. This miniature presents the Virgin in a rare and archaic manner: instead of riding the ass, she is walking behind Joseph with the Infant Christ in her arms.

**75\* THE VISION OF THE APOSTLES JAMES AND JOHN, f. 4**

We have here a combination of two motifs: Christ Teaching in the Temple and The Vision of the Apostles. The figure of Christ in the centre of the painting is flanked by the figures of the apostles; one of the female figures in the lower part of the painting is provided with an inscription which reads: "The mother of Zebedee's sons".

**76\* THE ASCENSION, f. 7**

The miniature is distinguished for its striking combination of pictorial laconicism with the deep inner expressiveness of images. The artist omits the figure of the Virgin, traditionally present in The Ascension, and depicts only four of the apostles, thus giving added prominence to the main figures in the scene. Another unconventional trait of the miniature is the ornamentation of the mandorla.

77, 78

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 6303)

13th–14th centuries

Origin and names of scribe and illustrator unknown

Vellum, 29 × 23.5 cm, 340 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 11 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

**77 CHRIST WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET, f. 3**

The only unusual feature of this otherwise iconographically conventional composition is the round ornamental table which serves as a symbol of The Last Supper. Introducing this symbol, the artist followed the well-known medieval practice of combining two motifs expressing the same general idea in one composition. Furthermore, one of the related motifs could be used as a substitute for another.

In this manuscript, as in many other Armenian illuminated books, ornamental decor occupies a prominent position: every miniature in the volume is surrounded by a framework of varied decorative patterns.

**78 THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, f. 4v**

The illustrator of this manuscript apparently preferred the full compositional versions of the Gospel scenes: the miniature in question represents all the twelve apostles; in accordance with the Gospel of St. Matthew, the ass upon which Christ is seated is accompanied by a colt (Matt. 21:2–7). The crowd of people welcoming Christ completes the composition.





























78 The Entry into Jerusalem, f.4v



## CILICIAN ARMENIA







79

**THE GOSPELS (Ms. 7700)**

1237, town of Sis

Written by Grigor; name of illuminator unknown

Vellum, 17.5 × 12.3 cm, 297 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, marginals

The khorans and the Evangelist portraits were apparently executed by two different masters of the same school.

**79 ST. MATTHEW, f.6v**

The colouring of this and of the other Evangelist portraits in the manuscript is soft and harmonious, the forms are delicately modelled, the silhouettes are somewhat elongated, and every detail of the composition is sharply delineated. The shading, although definitely aimed at rendering volume, fails to produce a three-dimensional effect; the picture is reminiscent of a low relief.

80-83

**THE GOSPELS (Ms. 3033)**

1251, Hromkla monastery, Cilicia

Written by Sargis; name of illuminator unknown

Parchment, 21 × 15 cm, 411 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages

**80 KHORAN, f.8**

The festive atmosphere permeating the picture is created by the brilliant colour range of blues, greens and reds touched with gold. The elaborate ornamental designs are executed with great skill and ingenuity. The ornamentation is based on palmettes which fill the rectangular headpiece of the Canon table and decorate the bases and capitals of the columns which, unlike many other khorans in this manuscript, do not imitate the texture of stone, but are treated schematically as bands of gold covered by interlacing red and blue narrow stripes. The characteristic movements of the birds filling the top and outer margins are rendered in an accurate and lifelike manner.

**81\*, 83 ST. MARK, f.125v; ST. LUKE, f.197v**

Both compositions are dominated by the large-scale figures of the Evangelists. The role of architectural background is reduced to a minimum, the small towers in the left background corner of each of the two miniatures being treated in a summary manner and resembling more the backs of the Evangelists' chairs than buildings. This lack of interest in the architectural background was typical of the Hromkla school in general, and was shared even by Toros Roslin himself. Although his treatment of background was on the whole more detailed, it never played such an important role in his compositions as in the miniatures produced in other Cilician centres (see Pls. 104, 110). The figures of the Evangelists show the artist's attempt to model the body shapes by means of shading. At the same time, both miniatures reveal his interest in linear design which is manifest in the sharp delineation of the folds of the garments and in the somewhat graphical character of representation. The ornamental design of the frame is evocative of cloisonné enamel.

**82\* FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK, f.120**

The design of the page combines decorative splendour with the clarity and simplicity of ornament - a combination typical of the Hromkla school. The decor of the headpiece is based on a chain of clearly delineated palmettes; the two ducks on top of the headpiece are presented facing each other, their movements rendered with an obvious concern for realism.









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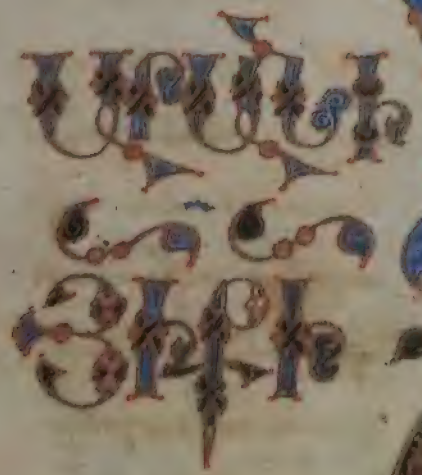
81 St. Mark, f. 125v

82 First page of the Gospel of St. Mark, f. 126



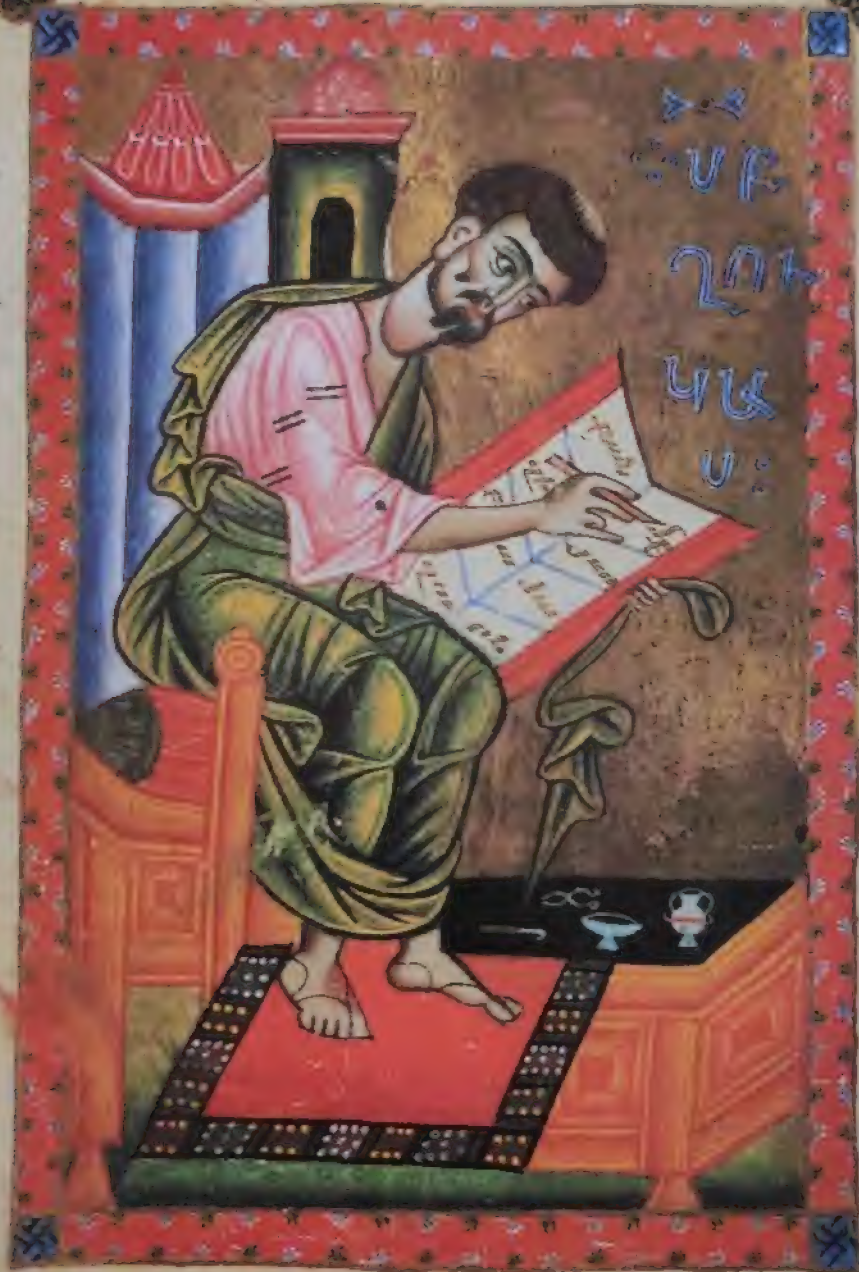


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84 Christ and the Angel, f. 235v

84–86

# THE GOSPELS (fragments, Ms. 5458)

1266, Hromkla monastery, Cilicia

Name of scribe unknown; illuminated by Toros Roslin

Parchment, 32.5 × 24 cm, 38 ff. of the original Cilician part (with a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century addition of several folios written and illuminated in Vaspurakan)

Portraits of the Evangelists (in the Vaspurakan section of the manuscript), 2 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals

## 84 CHRIST AND THE ANGEL, f. 235v

The miniature is remarkable for its highly emotional character and the elegant proportions of the figures. The poses of both Christ and the angel are well-balanced and natural, although the hands and feet of Christ seem somewhat large and heavy.

## 85\* PAGE WITH A MARGINAL, f. 254v

Both the initial and the marginal are executed in the artist's favourite design of interlacing blue palmettes against a gold background, enlivened by occasional white patches and red swirls.

## 86 PAGE WITH A MARGINAL MINIATURE REPRESENTING CHRIST, f. 252

The page is remarkable for its clear and elegant calligraphy in which gold letters and ornate initials are set off by the austere black characters of the uncial script, and for the exquisite artistry of the marginal miniature which is in perfect harmony with the marginal ornamental design.

The image of Christ impresses one by its tranquil grandeur due to the skillful balance of the vertical and horizontal lines (Christ's upright figure and his flying cloak). But the most striking thing about the miniature is its emotion-charged colouring. The dark and gloomy hues give a tragic touch to the picture, while Christ's eyes seem to express serene calm and fortitude.













87 Letter of Eusebius to Carpianus, f. 4v

87-89

# THE GOSPELS (Ms. 8321)

13th century, Hromkla monastery, Cilicia  
Names of scribe and illuminator unknown  
Parchment, 15.8 × 11.3 cm, 356 ff.

Khorans, portrait of St. Matthew (a later addition), first  
pages, portrait of Prince Leon, marginals; top margins of all  
the folios cut off

## 87\* LETTER OF EUSEBIUS TO CARPIANUS, f. 4v

In spite of the small size of the volume and consequently of the  
miniatures, every element of the decor is precisely and skil-  
fully worked out. The colouring is characterized by a softness  
of hues matched by a discreet shimmering of gold.  
The subtle tonal modelling of Eusebius's face in the tympanum of the khoran shows the artist's proficiency.





The page displays exquisite proportions and a happy balance of all elements of the ornamentation. The latter include the rectangular headpiece and the columns decorated from base to capital with floral and geometrical motifs accompanied by the figures of birds.





89 Portrait of Prince Leon, f. 15

# 89 PORTRAIT OF PRINCE LEON, f. 15

The portrait displays the most characteristic features of the medieval approach: the strictly frontal view of the figure, the rigid, erect attitude, the conventional position of the arms and, finally, the schematic treatment of the face which is almost utterly devoid of any portrait characteristics. The only element which imparts a certain measure of realism to the miniature is the Prince's dress imitating the traditional attire of Armenian kings, with regard to its general design and colour. Similar representations of the royal garments, accurately conveying the precious, richly ornamented material of which they were made, frequently occur in Armenian miniatures and wall paintings from the tenth century onwards.



90-103

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 10675, known as the Malatian Gospels, after the town of Malatia where it was kept for some time)

1268, Hromkla monastery, Cilicia

Written and illuminated by Toros Roslin

Parchment, 22 × 17 cm, 332 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 13 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals

90\* LETTER OF EUSEBIUS TO CARPIANUS, f. 4

91\*, 92\* KHORANS, ff. 6, 12

The tympanums of the arches decorating the rectangular entablatures of the khorans comprise half-length representations - of Eusebius and Carpianus (on the pages with the Letter), of the prophets and of Christ and the Virgin (above the Canon tables). While representations of Eusebius and Carpianus occur frequently enough in Armenian illuminated manuscripts (although, according to S. Der Nersessian, they became widespread in Armenian and especially Cilician book painting only in the thirteenth century), the portrayal of the Old Testament prophets in a Gospel manuscript is rather unusual. The artist probably wished to emphasize the close links between the Old and the New Testament.

Thanks to Toros Roslin's skill the portraits become an integral part of the entire decorative composition, which also includes birds of different species, in most cases depicted very naturalistically. Some of them, however, at first sight appear to be merely elements of the ornamental pattern, and only a closer look reveals their lifelike features. In giving them a static character, at the expense of vividness and realism of representation, the artist had in mind the decorative role these figures were to play in the design of the page.

93 THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST, f. 22v

The poetical atmosphere of this scene is due to the colouring based on delicate pastel shades, and to the well-balanced disposition of figures delineated by soft, flowing lines. The river Jordan is treated in a purely decorative manner, with spirals for waves in the upper part and band-like waves in the lower part of the picture.

94 THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI, f. 19

The compact character of the composition is to a large extent due to its colouring, based on the sharp contrast between the gold halo around the Virgin's head and the deep saturated blue of the background representing the mouth of a cave.

Although the general effect is two-dimensional, the figures and details of the setting stand out clearly against the gold background. The main group is formed by Mary, St. Joseph

and the angel, the figure of the Virgin serving as the compositional centre.

The colour range which, together with the above-mentioned contrast of dark blue and gold, also includes delicate violet tints and bright patches of red, gives a jubilant note to the miniature.

95 THE LAST JUDGEMENT, f. 85v

Although the motif of The Last Judgement occurred frequently in early Armenian frescoes, it did not appear in illuminated manuscripts until the thirteenth century when it was taken up by Cilician book illustrators, Toros Roslin among them. In the Malatian Gospels we find a concise version of the scene treated in a grand and solemn manner, which is manifest in the strict symmetry of the composition. The three principal figures are supported by the subsidiary groups creating a rhythmical pattern. The dramatic element is enhanced by the colouring based on dense saturated tones.

96\* THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS, f. 98

The artist obviously attempts to convey the feeling of deep, though restrained grief: the faces are sad and mournful, the movements betray silent anguish. The outline of the Cross serves as an important expressive element of the composition. The colour range is composed of quiet shades of dark blues, pale violets and greyish-greens, without a single bright stroke, on a background of faintly shimmering gold.

97\* ST. MARK, f. 102v

The natural pose and the face with its expression of calm concentration were undoubtedly glimpsed from real life. The colouring is based on the artist's favourite combination of rich blues and gold, with touches of bright red enhancing the vividness of the composition.

98\* FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK, f. 103

The decor of the page is harmoniously balanced. In choosing the figure of Christ on a winged lion's back for his initial, Roslin made use of a motif known in Armenian book painting long before him.

99\* THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, f. 137

Unlike most of the other historiated miniatures in the manuscript, this scene does not occupy a full page, but is placed under the text, in the lower part of the folio. The figures are arranged almost symmetrically, in a frieze-like fashion, thus forming a well-balanced composition. The animation of the faces, the poses and gestures of the characters suggest that the artist sought to enliven the canonical scheme with details borrowed from real life.



100 THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, f.294v

This miniature, with its exceptional harmony of composition and colouring and the perfect balance of its figural arrangement, is definitely one of the best in the manuscript. An important role is assigned here to the architectural background, namely to the building placed in the right-hand part of the painting and reminiscent of a folding screen seen from above. The "folds" of this structure create the effect of spatial depth, which serves to counterbalance the left, somewhat overcrowded part of the miniature. To the usual emphasis on the miraculous element wrought with dramatism, the artist prefers a rendering which allows for a vividness of expression and an authenticity of characters.

101 THE NATIVITY, f.177

In terms of composition this is one of the most complex scenes in the manuscript. Contrary to his usual practice of choosing laconic versions of the Gospel scenes, Toros Roslin depicts here a great number of figures connected with various subsidiary motifs. Thus, apart from the angels above the cave, the miniature includes the scenes of The Bathing of the Child, The Annunciation to the Shepherds and The Adoration of the Magi. This combination of several motifs irrespective of time and place, typical of medieval art, imparts to the scene a somewhat artificial character, which is on the whole unusual for Toros Roslin.

At the same time, the multifigured composition does not in any way impede the understanding of its message, since the focal point of the scene is made conspicuous by means of a contrast between the bright red cover of the Virgin's bed and the deep black mouth of the cave.

102 THE CRUCIFIXION, f.321

Whereas in *The Descent from the Cross* (Pl.96) the artist emphasized the inner dramatism of the scene, in *The Crucifixion* he is more concerned with the motifs of sacrifice and redemption, and in his attempt to convey the latter he endows the otherwise mournful scene with a certain touch of elation. This is achieved by the soft colouring excluding all contrasting colours, as well as by the treatment of the principal characters. The allegories of Ecclesia and Synagogue which were quite a novelty in the Armenian miniature at the time were borrowed by the artist from Byzantine and Western European art.

103 THE INCREDULITY OF THOMAS, f.326

The scene is very rarely found in the work of Armenian illustrators. Toros Roslin's version of it in the *Malatian Gospels* is endowed with tragic significance. The saturated blue of the upper part of the miniature which serves to set off its compositional centre, the energetic outline of the rock which resembles a torn and crumpled strip of paper and serves as an expressive decorative element, and, finally, the flying cloak of Christ all create an atmosphere of intense and dynamic dramatism.





























98











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**THE BIBLE** (Ms. 345)

1270, Gner monastery (?), Cilicia

Written by Barsegh; name of illuminator unknown

Parchment, 31 × 24 cm, 819 ff.

Portraits of the Evangelists, headpieces, marginals

## 104\* ST. MATTHEW, f. 647v

The miniature displays the artist's interest in architectural background, also evident in other manuscripts belonging to the same group as the 1270 Bible. The conglomeration of buildings seen behind the Evangelist is depicted, in the typically medieval manner, with the help of inverted perspective meant to render spatial depth. Both the buildings and the figure of the Evangelist are characterized by somewhat elongated proportions. The skilful treatment of the folds of St. Matthew's robe and the subtle tonal modelling of the face suggest that the artist was trained under a very competent master.

## 105–109

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7644, known as the Gospels of Constable Smbat, after the man who commissioned the manuscript)

1260–76, Cilicia

Exact origin, names of scribe and illuminator unknown

Parchment, 23.5 × 16.8 cm, 381 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 8 full-page historiated miniatures

## 105\*, 108\*, 109 KHORANS, ff. 4, 8, 9v

The artist gives preference to large-scale decorative elements and designs, and the columns of his khorans are shorter than usual. The restrained colour range is based on a combination of red (the prevalent colour), blue and gold.

The treatment of details demonstrates the perfect taste of the illuminator. He supplements the intricate ornamental patterns with numerous figures of birds (cocks, hoopoes, etc.) and gives the columns' capitals the shape of ox or lion heads. Both the birds and the animal heads, despite their apparent naturalism, have a purely decorative colouring.

## 106 ST. MARK, f. 124v

The Evangelists' portraits in the Gospels of Smbat, like those in the 1270 Bible (see Pl. 104), are marked by an obvious interest in the architectural setting. The contrast between the relatively small figure of St. Mark and the tall magnificent buildings reaching almost to the top border creates an effect of solemnity. The optical treatment of the townscape shows that the artist was familiar with the laws of perspective, while the

tonal modelling of the face and the body of St. Mark betrays an attempt to convey volume. The palette of the miniature is more varied than that of the khorans and first pages thanks to the use of ochreous, light green, pale lilac and blue shades supporting the basic combination of reds and dark blues.

## 107 FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK, f. 125

The decor of the page is in perfect keeping with the illumination of the Canon tables, showing the same clarity of forms and simplicity of large-scale ornamental patterns. Additional expressiveness is achieved with the help of the ornate initial composed of two winged lions facing each other.

## 110, 111

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7648)

1270s, Cilicia

Exact origin, names of scribe and illuminator unknown

Parchment, 22 × 15.7 cm, 300 ff.

Khoran, portrait of St. Mark, first pages, initials

The miniatures in the manuscript are stylistically related to those in the Gospels of Smbat and in the 1270 Bible.

## 110\* ST. MARK, f. 82v

The Evangelist is presented in a free and natural attitude; his movements display confidence and calm, the face is subtly modelled by means of delicate shading. The architectural background of the scene contributes to the effect of spatial depth created by the composition.

## 111\* FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, f. 228

The ornamentation of the headpiece is based on a pattern of interlacing red lines which form pentagonal and octagonal stars standing out against the gold background in a kind of decorative lattice. The use of black aimed at giving prominence to the pattern emphasizes the glow of the gold and imparts an additional splendour to the decor of the headpiece.

The treatment of the ornamental patterns in this and other manuscripts of the same school is much more detailed and elaborate than in the miniatures produced at Hromkla. The marginal ornamentation on this page may serve as a good example. It is based on a very complicated pattern in which every subsequent motif grows, as it were, out of the one preceding it: thus, the foliate design incorporates various figures; the interlacing bands support human heads crowned by the figures of birds, whose tails form new interlacing bands, and so on. Worthy of attention is the script which, apart from the usual ornate initial, is composed of large ornamental characters incorporating zoomorphic and geometric elements.



































112–125

**LECTIONARY** (Ms. 979)

1286, Cilicia

Exact origin, names of scribe and illuminator unknown

Parchment, 33.5 × 24.5 cm, 479 ff.

Title-pages, historiated miniatures (8 full-page ones, 2 occupying a third and 3 a quarter of the page), marginals (about 400), initials

112\* **BASIL THE GREAT**, f. 6v

The manuscript opens with a portrait of one of the Fathers of the Church who was traditionally believed to be the author of the Lectionary. The full-length representation in an upright attitude is apparently derived from the Byzantine tradition of portraying saints, while the ornamentation of the wide frame surrounding the figure reflects a typically Oriental taste for excessive decoration. The frame, apart from its purely decorative role, performs the important function of creating a visual link between the human figure and the marginal decor of the page, thus uniting the pictorial and decorative principles of illumination. The skilfully applied shading enabled the artist to achieve perfection in the rendering of facial expression.

113–117, 119 **TITLE-PAGES**, ff. 10\*, 7\*, 59\*, 158, 181, 334

These exquisitely decorated title-pages give an idea of the exceptional richness of decor typical of the manuscript as a whole.

The system of illumination of the title-pages and first pages of the Gospels was elaborated in the course of the development of Cilician art by several generations of miniaturists. It included as a rule three essential elements: the ornamental headpiece, the marginal running lengthwise from top to bottom, and the initial composed of ornamental motifs or of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures. The title-pages of the 1286 Lectionary are examples of this system at its best. Their decor, apart from elaborate ornamental patterns, contains human and animal figures which are treated as organic elements of the overall decorative scheme. Among the former, we most often find the Four Evangelists and the Old Testament prophets, as well as other characters whose appearance is justified by the contents of the corresponding chapters. As for the animal figures, many are utterly irrelevant to the subject-matter as such and are introduced merely for the sake of decorativeness, as monsters, dragons, monkeys, three-faced creatures and so on.

The richness of decoration displayed in the Lectionary was not only due to the artist's exuberant imagination, but also to his excellent knowledge of local and Byzantine models, natural in a Cilician artist, and above all to his familiarity with the art of China, Persia, Egypt and Western Europe. Furthermore, he must have been well acquainted with various artistic crafts, particularly with jewellery-making, judging from the

peculiar relief technique of his ornamentation where certain details are brought out with the help of thick layers of special paste covered with paint or gold.

Every one of the title-pages displays a unique combination of ornamental motifs and colours, each time creating a new artistic image.

118 **THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM**, f. 137v

Almost the entire pictorial space is filled with figures, the role of the landscape and of architectural motifs being reduced to minimum, and little space left for the gold background. The difference in the size of the figures is due to the artist's attempt to discriminate between the characters in terms of their relative importance, and has nothing to do with the spatial approach or perspective. Such a naive gradation of figures makes the composition of the scene seem somewhat schematic, in contrast to the figures themselves, treated in an almost realistic manner.

The palette of the artist is rich and brilliant, consisting of subtle shades of pink, violet, light green, golden or brown, combined with occasional bright touches of dark blue, red and gold. The magnificence of colour is supported by the beauty of the filigree ornamentation of the framing, whose floral design incorporates representations of twenty-two prophets, displaying a variety of both facial types and attitudes.

120 **THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE**, f. 58v

The festive atmosphere of the miniature is created by the rich brilliant colours, by the generous use of gold and by the refined and exquisite ornamental treatment. The minute, closely-knit design of the frame is counterbalanced by the floral ornaments extending onto the margins of the folio. The treatment of the garments performs the twofold function of modelling the shape of the body and of heightening the purely decorative effect of the miniature.

121 **THE THREE HEBREWS IN THE FIERY FURNACE**, f. 207

The miniature dwells on a biblical story according to which three young Hebrews – Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego – who had refused to worship the gold idol of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar were by his order cast “into the midst of a burning fiery furnace” (Dan. 3:15).

Apart from the crucial point of the story – the Hebrews being cast into the furnace and receiving protection from an angel – which is the subject of the miniature in the lower part of the page, the artist depicts the preceding events in a succession of small-scale miniatures incorporated into the design of the border.







122 CHRIST WITH HIS DISCIPLES, f. 167

The folio presents an interesting example of a miniature incorporated into the text: the absence of usual framing and the elements of architectural background overlapping the written lines emphasize the unity of text and illustration, less apparent in the case of the full-page miniatures.

The horizontal composition allows for a free and unrestrained arrangement of the figures, which, in its turn, contributes to the mood of concentration and tranquillity permeating the scene. The soft, somewhat restrained colouring composed of pink, blue, pale lilac, violet and light green shades enhances this effect.

In presenting the Disciples as listening to their Teacher the artist obviously sought to capture their different reaction to Christ's words, their different manner of listening, thus making a bold, if only tentative attempt at individualization.

123 THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS, f. 193

The miniature combines three related scenes in one composition: Joseph of Arimathea before Pilate Asking for the Body of Christ, The Descent from the Cross, and The Entombment.

The many expressive devices used serve to accentuate the dramatic significance of the event. The composition is filled with pictorial details; the linear treatment based on the interlacing of curves creates a feeling of nervous anxiety; the figures are elongated to the point of distortion and do not correlate with each other in size; the gestures are intense and full of dynamism, the faces grave and sorrowful. A sense of drama is also conveyed in the colouring of the miniature, with its splashes of bright red and blue turning to purple.

At the same time, in spite of what appears to be an overprofusion of figures and details, the composition of the scene is maintained with the help of several vertical and horizontal lines (the Cross, the buildings in the background and the framing) which counterbalance the diagonal lines of the figures.

124 THE HOLY WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE, f. 210v

The highly expressive figural and decorative treatment and the vigorous movement of the angel's wings impart an air of agitation and disquietude to the scene. The folds of the robes, the texture of the stone, the wings of the angel, even St. Peter's hands and the lances of the soldiers are treated as elements of the ornamental design.

125 JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA, f. 199

The stylized treatment of the sea depicted as a conglomeration of spiral-shaped waves was apparently inspired by the art of the Far East. In depicting the faces and gestures the artist managed to capture the fearful anxiety of the characters.





George Washington

Les Goussiers.

[illegible]

points : la pénétration

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Struysfiften, runder

դէ : Լատանց Նորա Եղև

Լոյկնայ որինայ եղև : Նոր

Կապեանքեր: Կեանք

Երայանասրբան : Երայան

Ինչպես արի անդ լուսաւորեալ:

Le fumeur ne peut pas se lever le dimanche.

alumnus universitatis

*[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page]*

1141

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Գրքի-ժամ գրվածքն

unabhängig von der Zeit.  $\mathcal{L}$  ist dann

դէ վարդապետ: յիսկերէ

*etiam*

† *Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a continuation of the previous page.*

et d'après ces principes, les principes de la morale.

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 Տոմար : արարած : արարել

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*unfurnished*

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Երևան (Քան քաղաք) Երևան

որոց համառայեցին յանուհի

Արար: որքոչ յարենէ. եւոչ

Handwritten text: *Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, written in cursive script.*



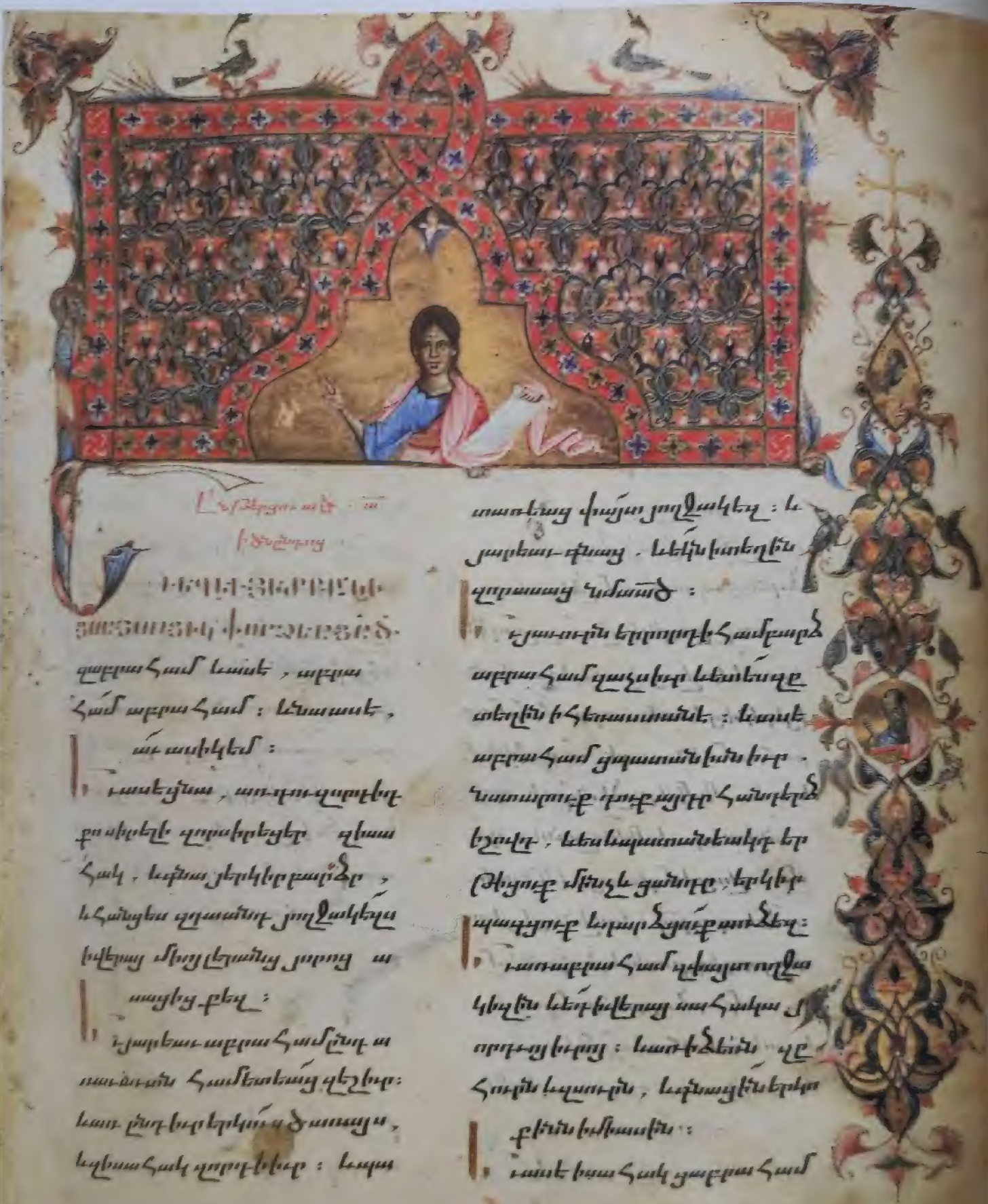


























Եւ ի յայնքաւորսն յայնքին



Գրեցան ծիսն հանդերձ յուսեի  
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 ի զհոգիս իւր երկրորդս  
 իւր, եւ տար անշահուովն  
 ծայրան, եւ գիտն ընդ  
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մատուցեալ սուպիդատու ինք

րեանց զմարմինն յի : յայնժա մ

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 մարմինն : Եւ տեալ զմարմին

յովսէփ . պատեաց սրկատուք .

և եղինոր գերեզմանի զորփորեց

իսկ յի : Եւ թաալեցուցեալ կա

փարիչ զրան գերեզմանին զեմ

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Նոքերմարիամ մագրաղե

նացի և Լաւան մարիամն : Նստե

ին հանդէպ գերեզ

մանին :



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 գալիլեա . և անդռտեացեն զիս :  
 Երևնդ քաղաքին . ահա



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 ինսարար : զկուտորակեմա  
 մեցար արարեր : և ամին զյով  
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 և արամանեադրամ ի կառնն  
 մեծի կանեղ զյովնան : և եր  
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 ին խամա՞ծ : ամ ծմբոյր քո :

Եւ յովնան ի ծովն :

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 ամաճ : կեռնն ի ամաճ :

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126-131

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 197)

1287, Akner monastery

Written by Hovhannes; name of illuminator unknown

Parchment, 26.3 × 18 cm, 357 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 12 full-page historiated miniatures

**126 THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST**, f. 20v

The miniatures in the Gospels are stylistically related to those in the 1286 Lectionary, which means that they were either executed by one and the same master or at least produced at the same scriptorium.

The compositional arrangement of this scene is based on several large-scale figures, whose exaggerated size, dynamic postures and curved silhouettes contribute to the dramatic expressiveness of the miniature.

The landscape is stylized and treated as part of the overall decorative design of the illustration.

The study of the paint layer (which is here in a better state of preservation than in the other illustrations of this manuscript) enables us to judge of the original colouring and of the artist's favourite colour combinations. Although his palette does not include pure local colours, it is rich in various saturated hues, like pink, grey and greenish- or brownish-red.

**127 THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM**, f. 71v

The composition is stylistically related to the miniature depicting the same subject in the 1286 Lectionary, and presents a reduced version of the same iconographic model.

Just as in the 1286 Lectionary (see Pl. 121), the characters are treated with a striking vividness and realism; their postures are natural and convincing, their faces and movements lively and expressive.

Tonal modelling aimed at achieving the effect of volume is reinforced by a sharp delineation of contours. The most prominent part in the colouring is played by different shades of lilac, violet and pink. The ingenious use of gold applied in fine, light strokes imparts a relief-like character to every detail.

**128 THE CRUCIFIXION**, f. 97v

The treatment of the scene is evocative of The Descent from the Cross in the 1286 Lectionary (see Pl. 123). The artist here also succeeded in conveying the grief and anguish of the characters, but did it in a less affected and more natural way.

**129 THE ANNUNCIATION**, f. 169v

The miniature conveys a feeling of anxiety and apprehension as reflected in the gestures of the archangel, in the general rhythm of forms, and in the spatial arrangement and colouring. The latter is rich and varied, and the colours are applied in a carpet-like fashion, leaving very little room for gold. Even though the paint layer is not in a very good state of preservation, most of the blues being altogether lost, the colouring of the miniature retains its expressiveness. As elsewhere in this manuscript, the artist uses here his favourite quiet reddish tints, effectively set off by occasional patches of dark red.

In so far as iconography is concerned the miniature deviates in some ways from traditional models. Thus, the scroll of parchment in the archangel's hand (instead of the more customary staff) and the crown on the Virgin's head are unusual for Armenian Gospel manuscripts and are due, according to S. Der Nersessian, to the influence of Western European art.

**130 THE DESCENT INTO LIMBO**, f. 335v

In spite of the multitude of figures filling the miniature, its compositional arrangement is remarkable for its clarity. The dramatic effect of the scene is produced by the vigorous movements of Christ and Adam whom he is taking out of hell, by the dynamic treatment of the draperies, caught, as it were, in the speed of movement, and also of the landscape and of certain minor details, hands in particular.

Incidentally, the colouring, composed of quiet and delicate shades of pink, lilac, pale green and light blue set off by gold, does not seem to support the dramatism of the composition.

Although the figures are presented in complex foreshortenings and the artist employs the technique of tonal modelling, the treatment of the scene, as of all the other miniatures in the manuscript, remains on the whole flat.

**131 THE ASCENSION**, f. 314v

The traditional austere solemnity of the Ascension scene, created first and foremost by its strictly symmetrical composition, is somewhat disturbed in this version due to the nervously expressive postures of the apostles and the dynamic movements of the flying angels.

Unfortunately the almost complete loss of blues in the paint layer impedes an adequate appreciation of the original colouring of the miniature and diminishes its overall emotional impact. We may try to visualize the original colouring with the help of the few preserved patches of blue. The colour combinations must have been refined and exquisite, including the contrasting shades of dark blue, pinkish-violet and gold. In all other miniatures in this manuscript the illuminator shows himself as a fine colourist with a rich and effective palette dominated by a wide range of violet and lilac shades.



























## 132-139

## THE GOSPELS (Ms. 9422)

C. 1280

Origin, names of scribe and illuminator unknown

Parchment, 40.3 × 21 cm, 312 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 6 full-page historiated miniatures

The manuscript was rebound some time after it had been produced, and according to the tradition then current all the full-page miniatures were placed together to form a complete narrative cycle.

## 132-135 KHORANS, ff. 8, 9v, 3v, 5v\*

In so far as virtuosity of execution and the striking variety of ornamentation are concerned, the only other Cilician illuminated manuscript which can stand comparison with this one is the 1286 Lectionary. None of the four khorans reproduced here repeat one another in the arrangement and choice of ornamental patterns. The only respect in which they are comparable is the general design of the entablature: in two of the four khorans the rectangular top is supplemented by an arch-shaped ornamental pattern.

The khoran on f. 5v is a striking example of the effectiveness of such a combination: here the entablature resting on three slender ornate columns is pierced by two parallel arches. The scale-like ornamentation of the arches produces a relief-like effect, especially against the background of the entablature whose remaining surface is adorned with an elaborate but flat foliate design incorporating zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs.

The khoran on f. 9v, with its elaborate guilloche ornamentation, betrays the hand of a typically Oriental master favouring endlessly repeated interlacing patterns. The key motif of this khoran is the rosette, which was extremely popular with Armenian book illustrators, sculptors and stone-carvers (it was, for example, widely used in the ornamentation of khatchkars). The figures of birds, animals and horsemen which are either ingeniously interwoven into the guilloche of the entablature or placed on top of it, are depicted with amazing skill and a truly realistic precision of detail.

The khoran on f. 8 is characterized by an extremely well-balanced arrangement of the decorative elements. Its rectangular top comprises an arch-shaped "goffered" band which rounds off the elaborate openwork pattern against the gold background of the headpiece. The decor is supplemented by an almost realistically treated figural motif (the ten partridges surmounting the headpiece).

## 136 THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 12

The highly expressive character of this miniature is mainly accounted for by its colouring, rich in shades and exquisitely balanced. The combination of red, blue (or sometimes green) and gold, so typical of Cilician illumination, is supported here by a wide range of delicate pastel tints including pale lilac, soft violet, greyish-blue, ash-grey, cherry-red and light green. The refined colouring imparts a special charm to the picture in which every single detail is perfectly executed.

## 137 THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, f. 16

It is interesting to compare this miniature with The Raising of Lazarus by Toros Roslin (see Pl. 100) in terms of the changes in the style of Cilician miniature which took place between 1260 and 1280. Roslin's interpretation included only a few essential figures, whereas the present version depicts numerous characters. G. Millet in his *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile aux XIV<sup>e</sup>, XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos* (Paris, 1916), referring to the appearance (in some Italian and Armenian versions of this subject) of human figures behind the rock, characterized this iconographic type as evocative of Byzantine tradition. He explains the presence of these figures by the combination of the main motif with The Entry into Jerusalem. There is also a probability that the artist had in mind certain literary sources, depicting not a crowd of idle onlookers but a group of patriarchs and prophets hopefully watching the miracle from the "kingdom of the dead": according to some apocryphal sources and to the text of the Sharakan (an Armenian religious hymn), the raising of Lazarus gave them hope of salvation and deliverance from hell. The treatment of the figures shows the artist's concern for vivid and lifelike representation. Due to the subtle psychological nuances which he manages to convey, each of the characters bears a clear mark of individuality.

## 138, 139\* FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW, f. 20; FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK, f. 107

The decor here is less sumptuous than in the title-pages of the 1286 Lectionary (see Pls. 132-135). It is more moderate and compact in its proportions. The marginal decoration on f. 20 contains an allegoric representation of the Tree of Jesse. S. Der Nersessian believes that this motif, which had long been popular in Western European art, became more and more widespread during the thirteenth century in the art of Eastern Christendom.

The ornate headpiece of the other folio (f. 107) is reminiscent of a lattice window through which dazzling sunlight breaks forth. The overall decor of the folio is made remarkably attractive and expressive by the contrast of the light openwork ornament with the solid figures of two fallow deer presented symmetrically, in a heraldic fashion, in the middle of the headpiece, and with the delicate ornamental design of the border.





















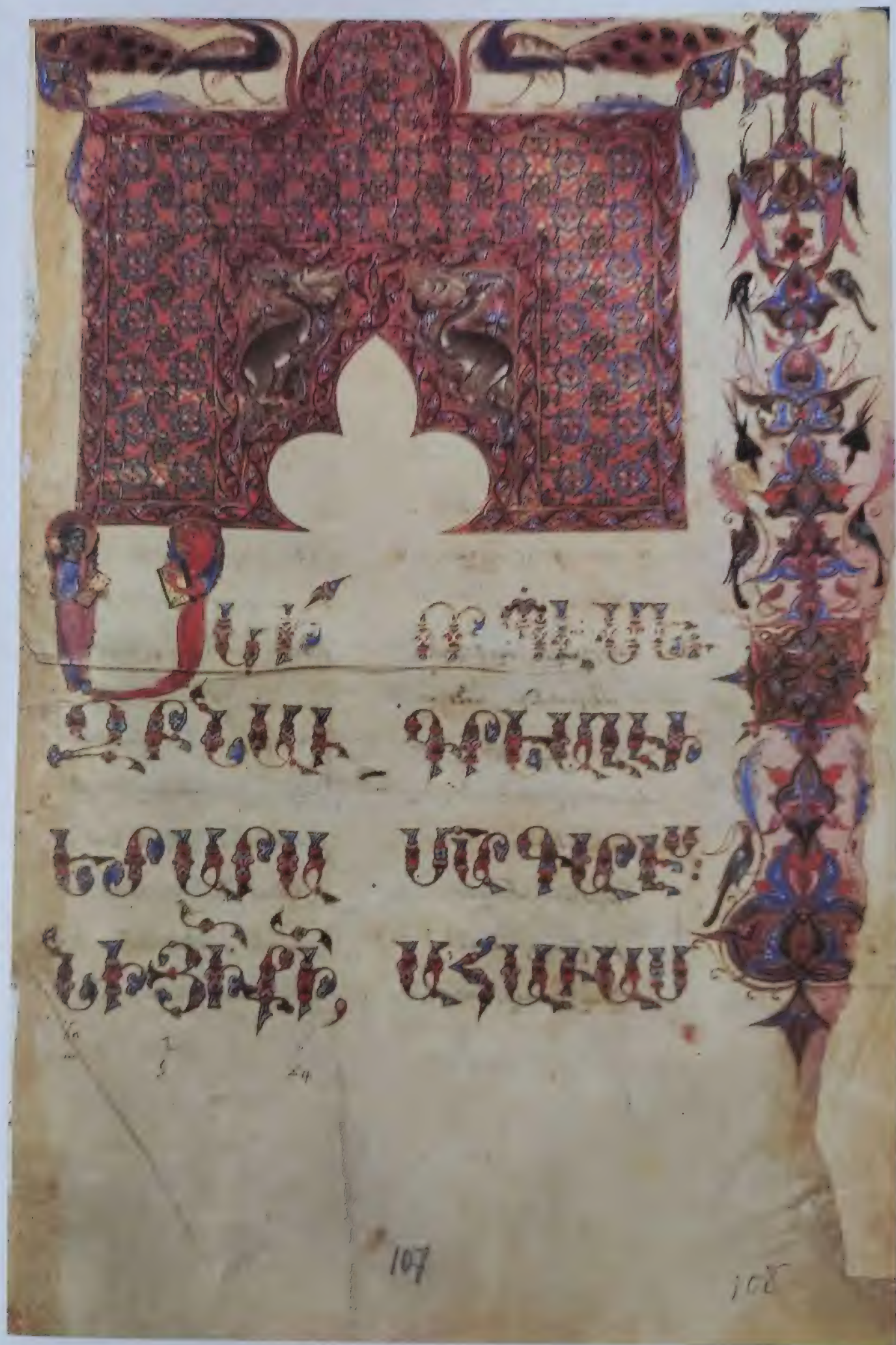














140

**MISCELLANY** (Ms. 179)

1292, Tarsus (?)

Written by Stepanos; name of illuminator unknown  
Parchment, 23 × 15.9 cm, 579 ff.

1 historiated miniature, title-page, marginals

140\* **MOSES RECEIVING THE TABLES OF THE LAW**, f. 1v

Judging by its stylistic traits manifest in the treatment of landscape and draperies and in the somewhat crude facial features of Moses, the miniature belongs to the same school of book illustration which was responsible for the Lectionary of 1286.

141, 142

**THE BIBLE** (Ms. 180)

1295

Written by Stepanos; origin and name of illuminator unknown

Parchment, 22 × 15.8 cm, 565 ff.

Portraits of the Evangelists, title-pages and first pages, marginals, initials, headpieces

Although the general style of the few marginals, headpieces and initials in this Bible is undoubtedly related to that of the 1286 Lectionary, the decor as such is much more modest, and the small slanting script gives an altogether different appearance to the illuminated folios.

141, 142 **MANUSCRIPT PAGE**, f. 29; **PAGE WITH THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PROPHET JOEL**, f. 388

The marginal ornaments, headpieces and ornate initials in the Bible are distinguished for their refinement of forms and for their minute treatment of details, which, together with their colouring based on bright red, deep blue and gold, are characteristic of Cilician miniatures produced between 1250 and 1290.

The initials, distinguished for the elegance of their proportions and the delicacy of ornamental design, are not stylized and retain a noble austerity of form.

143

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 5784)

1293, Skevra monastery, Cilicia

Written by Stepanos, illuminated by Simon  
Parchment, 22 × 15.8 cm, 565 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 9 full-page historiated miniatures (apparently added in the fifteenth century), marginals

143\* **ST. MATTHEW**, f. 12v

The style of the miniature retains certain traits proper to Cilician book painting of the 1280s. Thus, the facial type of the Evangelist, his somewhat heavy figure, the technique of face-modelling, and, finally, the choice of red, dark blue and dove-grey for the decoration of the framework go back to earlier models. But as interpreted by an artist working in the last decade of the century, there is a noticeable deterioration in almost all pictorial elements which lose their original harmonious integrity. This is especially evident in the simplified treatment of the figure, in the awkwardness of the posture, in the crude colouring and in the schematic linear design.

144

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 6290)

1295, Drazark monastery, Cilicia

Written by Toros and Ohan, illuminated by Ohan  
Parchment, 24 × 17.5 cm, 340 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, marginals. 1 historiated miniature (apparently from a different, non-Cilician manuscript of a later date)

The decline of Cilician miniature art towards the end of the thirteenth century is quite evident in this manuscript. It concerns the Evangelists' portraits and to an even greater extent the decor of the illuminated folios. The figures in the miniatures lose their suave elegance, the colours are no longer rich or refined. At the same time the main principles of figural and facial treatment and the traditions of the compositional arrangement of the scenes, inherited from the 1280s, remain almost unchanged.

144\* **KHORAN**, f. 10v

In accordance with the general tendency, the decor of the Canon tables becomes less imaginative in the choice of ornamental motifs. The general decorative pattern based on a carpet-like design creates the effect of flatness.



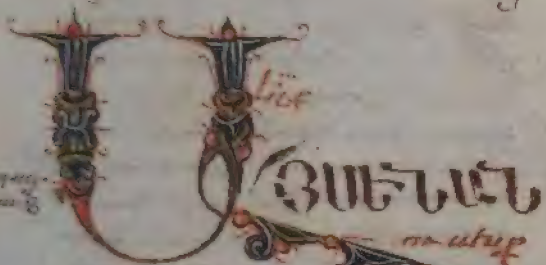
**Ը**որից ասան ամ ծառայեալ  
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 և հրամանաւ այդառնայ. գնալ առ-  
 հայրն իսահակ գնալ ի խաբանայ. **Բ**  
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 խաբան զհեղ յակոբայ. և իսահակն  
 յայնեղ յակոբայ. և իսահակն զո-  
 թառնալ զառնայ անդրէն յետ. **Ը**նդ  
 առաջ յիսրայելացի զեղ տակերայ. այլ  
 կասկածեալ նորա յիսահակն առաքե-  
 նաւ պատարագս. և բաժնաբերեալ յեր-  
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 իսրայիլացի բնակչաց երկրն. կորոսանե-  
 ին զանապ առտոռածն. **Ը**իսրայիլ  
 աճ զինչ զն յերթուրայ. և տայ նախ  
 վատահոթ ինչ յետ. **Ը**ուտի ինչ  
 կրկնակի զարձանն տոռնայ կոչե զտե-  
 ին զին. **Ը**երջ յերթաւս հասեալ զժ-  
 ոռարաւ ծին եղեալ հոգի ինչ տու-  
 ին անդէն թաղեցաւ. **Ը**լանե տու-  
 բէն յանկողինս հարն. ընդորո-  
 իսրայիլ յակոբ մինչ իսահակ. աստ թո-  
 ին զերկոսասան որդիսն յակոբայ.  
 և թե մեռան իսահակ իսահակե,  
 անխնայն քերոն. **Ը**  
**Ը**նուորք իսահակ ի իսահակ և թա-  
 զարորք իսահակ. **Ը**  
**Ը**ուտ ինչ երազոյն նախանձ կրեալ  
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 զայ մեռան իսահակ. իսահակն յա-  
 ցեալ ի յորդայն ծնանի երկոն.  
**Ը**ուտ իսահակն տիկնոջն զպարտ-  
 եալ յովսէփ և մեռալ ի բանաւ, մեծ  
 նեղեալս ծառայիցն փարաւոնի.  
**Ը**եղնեկ ապա և զփարաւոնի զերազ-  
 մն, և ժողովեց որեւն զն սոփոյն. և  
 ծնանի որդիս.  
**Ը**որդիս եղբարքն յովսէփո զգորեւոյ.



և ի կրկին զարձն ծանաւ թառեալ  
 նոցա. յղեաց զհարեւն և զբոլոր տանն  
 վանկարեաց սոփոյն. **Ը**  
**Ը**եալ յակոբ յետիւրայ տու-  
 նաւոն և հինգ տու-  
 զփարաւոն. ծերա տաժի մանեայն  
 որդեւոյն ի յովսէփայ.  
**Ը**ե տառացաւ յովսէփ զերկրն բնակ  
 զարքն հանդերձ փարաւոնի բնաց  
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 փո. մեծարեալ զկրկնէն իսահակ  
 նորոյս. և զսիրիլ յովսէփոն տեղահան  
 եալ. **Ը**որհնե ի ծառ մահոն զոր  
 իսահակն մարգարէութիւն. և իսահակն  
 յովսէփայ թաղել զինքն ի գերեզմանին  
 աբրահամեաց ի քերոն. զորեւոր  
 նախ.  
**Ը**իսրայիլ յովսէփ զկասկած եղբ-  
 արքն. և ինքն զերկն ծնանիս ծի-  
 րեմի տեւեալ. մարգարէանայ վան-  
 եղիցն. և աստ անկերացիորոց  
 պատու իրեւալ.  
 վախճանի ի փառս այ. **Ա**  
 Ը մեծ :

[ յորդայն ծնանի որդիս. զգորեւոյ.

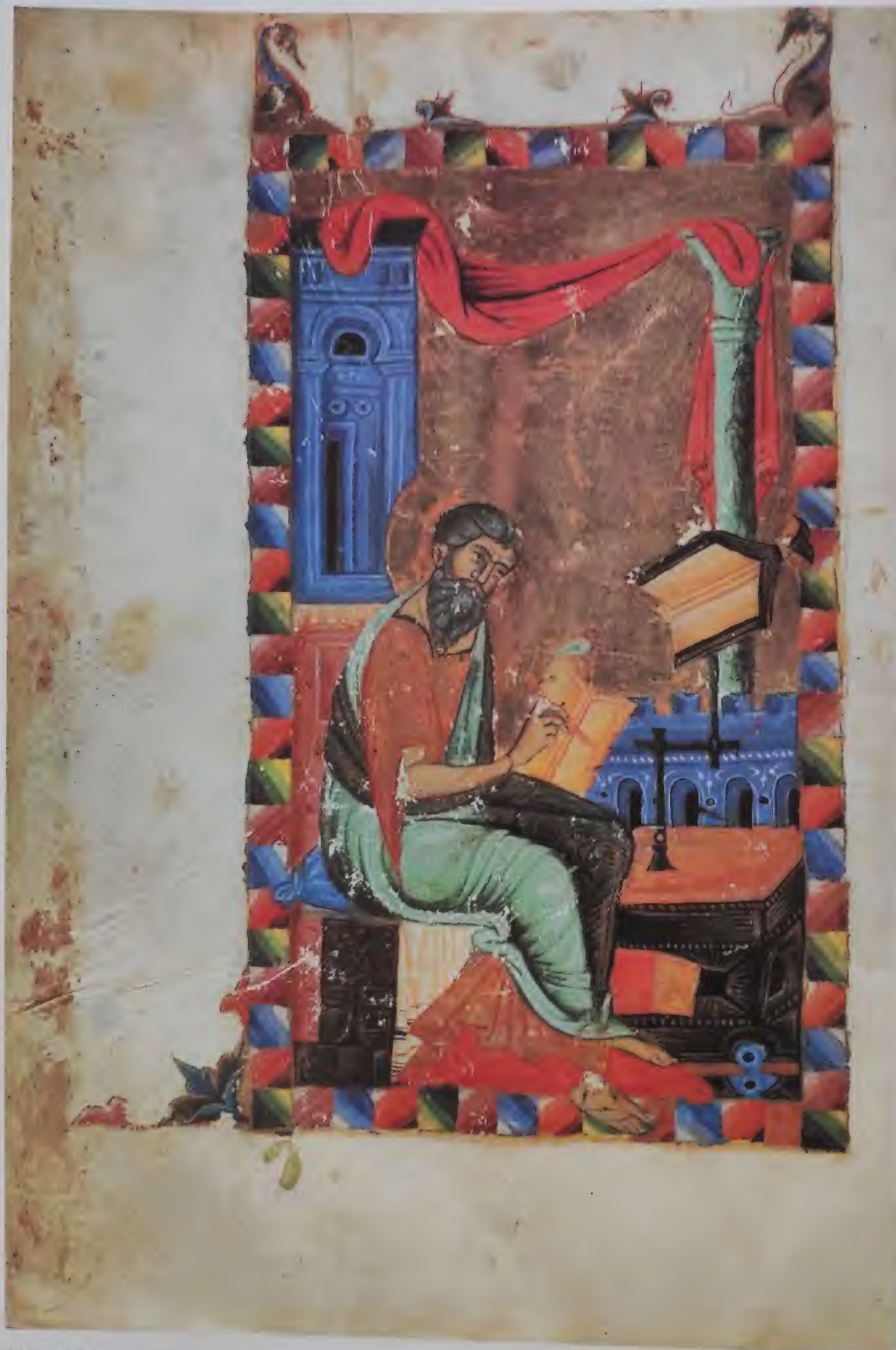


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## 145–150

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7651, known as the "Gospels by Eight Masters")

1320, Cilicia

Written by Stepanos; illuminated by eight artists, Sargis Pidzak among them

Parchment, 22.5 × 16.7 cm, 276 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 139 historiated miniatures

**145 THE MAGI BEFORE HEROD, f. 12**

The artist combines in this version several chronologically incompatible scenes referring to the arrival of the Magi in Jerusalem: he shows the Magi as an isolated group; then as standing before Herod who questions them on the birthplace of Jesus and consults the learned men; finally, the Magi appear for the third time as leaving the town. The figure in the right-hand margin represents the Prophet Micah who is referred to by the learned men. The treatment of decorative and pictorial details in the miniature, of the marginal and the initial results in the stylistic uniformity of the overall design of the page. The artist displays a perfect command of figural representation – in spite of their small size, the figures are minutely elaborated, and their movements and postures are expressive and natural.

**146 THE ARREST, f. 75v**

This and the reproduction immediately following (see Pl. 148) show the two-page spread containing illustrations to the episodes of The Betrayal and Christ's Trial by the High Priests. Although the miniature is not limited by the usual rectangular frame, its composition is well-defined and complete in itself due to the compact arrangement of the figures which fit so neatly into the general scheme that the spaces between them (filled in with gold) are very small. The left lower part of the miniature shows the episode of The Cutting-off of the Ear of the High Priest's Slave.

**147\* CHRIST BROUGHT BEFORE CAIAPHAS, f. 76**

In this miniature the artist obviously sought to provide the text with as comprehensive an illustration as was possible within the limits of the page. It embraces several related episodes and covers the entire lower margin of the folio and part of the right-hand margin. The narrative character of the miniature is corroborated by the strict chronological order of the events depicted which follow each other in succession, step by step, from left to right.

**148\* THE COMMUNION OF THE APOSTLES, f. 73**

Although the motif of The Holy Communion (The Eucharist) connected with the theme of The Last Supper was widespread in Armenian fresco painting, it does not often occur in book illustration.

The miniature occupies the lower part of the page and, apart from the numerous gold initials, is the only decorative element. The miniature is flanked by draperies, as if to prevent the scene from overflowing onto the margins. The composition of the miniature is strictly balanced by the two symmetrical groups of figures united by the figure of Christ in the middle. The colouring is based on red, blue and gold.

The pictorial treatment of the scene, especially in so far as the modelling of faces is concerned, is somewhat schematic and betrays a less competent hand than that which is apparent in The Magi before Herod (see Pl. 145). Even though the artist employs the more advanced technique of shading, he still resorts to the linear method.

**149\* THE MOCKING OF CHRIST; THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS BY SIMON THE CYRENIAN, f. 79**

The narrow frieze-like composition incorporated into the text is skilfully united with the marginal representation of Simon of Cyrene carrying the Cross to Calvary. The saturated colours and dynamic linear rhythm contribute to the atmosphere of foreboding and nervous tension inherent in the episodes illustrated.

**150\* THE ENTOMBMENT, f. 81v**

The composition of the miniature is based on a balance between the two interrelated groups of figures, each of them characterized by complicated postures and varied movements (when the manuscript was rebound its top margins were cut off, and the upper part of the illustration was unfortunately lost). In terms of iconography this version is reminiscent of certain fragments from the scenes of The Descent from the Cross and The Entombment as rendered in the 1286 Lectionary (see Pl. 123). This probably indicates that the illustrators of these two manuscripts used the same iconographic model, but in the case of the 1320 Gospels this model was presented in a reduced version, probably for lack of space.

On the whole, the comparison of the two versions is not to the advantage of the later one. The miniature in the "Gospels by Eight Masters" is characterized by a certain schematism and by an increased interest in the linear method. Besides, its colouring is less varied, while the use of shading in the modelling of faces and figures is rather limited and inadequate.

The general decorative layout of the page, however, the treatment of certain details, and the skilful arrangement of figures are indicative of the artist's proficiency and taste.



որ ինմայն ծնեալէ ի հորոյն արքայէ, ծն  
ցի որդի, և կոչեաց զանունն նորա յն : զի  
նա փրկեաց զժողովորդս ի մեղաց իրեանց :

**Լ**այս ասանայն եղև, զի Լքցի որսա ա  
ցանիսէ ի ձեռն ևսացայ մարգարէի, ա  
հա կոյս յղացի և ծնցի որդի, և կոչեաց  
են զանուն նորա եւ մանուկ, որ թարգ  
մանի ընդ մեզ **ան** :

**Ե**ւարթուցեալ յովսէփ և Երնայանտի, ա  
րար որպէս հրամայեաց նմա հրեշտակն  
ան, և առ յինքն զկինն իւր, և ոչ գիտէ ը  
զնա, մինչև ծնաւ զորդին իւր զանդրանիկ  
և կոչեաց զանուն նորա յն :

**Ի ԺԱՌԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԻ, Ի ԲԵՆԵՂՈՒՆԻ**  
րեաաաանի յառորա հերովդի, արքայ ի :  
**Լ**համոզք յարեւելից եկին եւսասեն,  
որե որ ծնաւ արքայն հրեկց : զիտապք զաստի





արելի քան զերկրոտառանդոնորս հրե  
տակաց : այլ զհարս ընդցունելիք թե

այսպէս պարտելինել :

այն ժամատայ **յս** ցամբոխան : իբրե

ի վերայ առաջակի ելէք առսերաբ կարպե  
ունել զիս : հանապաղ առ ձեզ իստաճարին

նատէի, և առուցանելի, և ոչ կաղաք զիս : այլ

բայսամենայն եղև, զի զցինդիք ճարպարեց :

այն ժամ աշակերտք նամենեքին (Թողին  
զնա և Իսական :

**ԱՆՏՈՅԱ ԿԱԿԱՆ, ԳՅՈՒ, ԱԾԻԱ ՈՍ,**

կայի ափա քահանայապետ որդիքիք

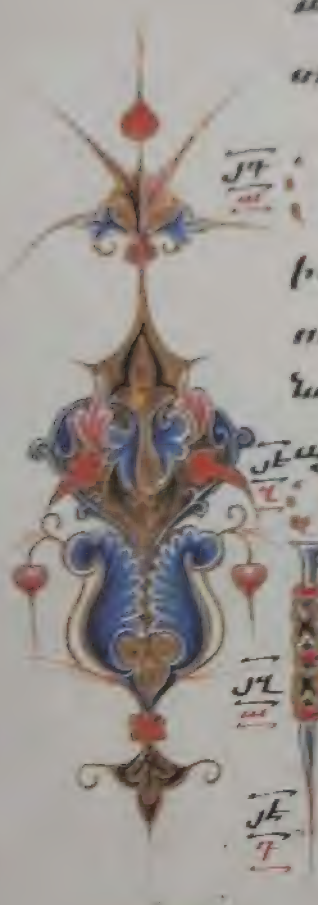
և ծեքք ժողովեալնին :

Եւ ի պետրոս զհետնորա եր(ժայր բաց ա

գոյն մինչև Իսարահ քահանայապետի ն :

և մտեալ ինեղբս նատեր ընդապառաւորս ն

տեսանել զկատարածն :





1. սկ. քաջանայապետն և ամենայն աս  
 2. անն խնորհին աստ փայտօթին **զ. յ. Ե.**  
 3. զիսպանանիցն զնա, և ոչ գտանեին ի բաղ  
 4. մայ աստ փայտին մատուցելոյ :  
 5. 6. Եւ այդ մատուցեալ երկու աստ փայր աս  
 7. տին : Թաա ասեր : Կարողեմ քակե ը  
 8. զառաքան, և իւրիս աստրա շինել :  
 9. 10. Եւ արուցեալ քաջանայապետն աս ե  
 11. ցնա : Հաա ինչ պատասխանի զինչ ք  
 12. քա ամբաստանենդ զքէն :  
 13. 14. Եւ **յ. Ե.** ըստ կայր :  
 15. 16. Կատասխանի Լաքաջանայապետն և աս  
 17. սէցնա : Երդմե և ցուցանեմ զքեզ **յ. Ե. Ժ.**  
 18. 19. Կենքանի զիստասցես մեզ եւ Թեդոն քան  
 20. **որդի աս :**  
 21. 22. Եւ սէցնա **յ. Ե.** : Դո ասացեր :  
 23. 24. Եւ այ ասեմ ձեզ : յայտմ հետե տես աս  
 25. 26. Եւ իւրեք զորդի մարդայ Դատեալ ընդաջ Թե  
 27. 28. Կարող Թեանն, և եկեալ ընդամարկերկնոյ :  
 29. 30. Եւ այն Ժամ քաջանայապետն պատասխանայ  
 31. 32. զհամդեր ձախի, և ասէ : Դայ հոյ եա ց :





նոյա յն և պատրաստեցին զզատիկ ն :  
Եւ իբրեւ երեկոյ եղև հայր բազմեալ ընդ  
երկու տասան աշակերտան :

**Եր** Եւ ինչ զեռուտեինն նոքա , ասէ : ամեն  
ասեմ ձեզ : զի միոմնի ձեռն մատնելոյեղիս :

**Եւ** Եւ արամեցան յայժ : ակսան ասելցնա ի-  
րաքանչ իւրոք ինոցանէ , մի թեւսեցեմ որ :

**Եւ** Եւ պատասխանի ետեասէ , որմեաց ընդ  
իսզ ձեռնի իրիակատառակո , նա մատնելոյեղիս :

Եւ ըրի մարդոյ երթայ որպէս գրեալ է վասն  
նորա , բայց վայ մարդոյնայնմիկ յայր ձեռ-  
ուրդին մարդոյ մատնեացի :

**Եւ** Եւ ասէր նա ( թէ չէր ծնեալ մարդնայ ն :

**Եւ** Եւ աստախանի ետ յուրա որմատնելոյն եր-  
զնա եասէ , մի թեւսեմ վարդապետ :

Եւ ասէցնա : Դու ասացեր :

**Եւ** Եւ ինչ զեռուտեինն նոքա , աս յն հաց , առ  
հընեաց , եբեկ , ետաշակերտացն եասէ , առ-  
եք կերպք , այսէ մարմին իմ :





**Լ** Երկային զնա, և արկին զնա քաղա  
 ձիւ կարմիր : Երկուրեալ պատկ ի վշտ ց  
 եղին խորտանորա : Եւ երկնյա ճառնորն :



**Ժ** Ժամեր իջեալ առաջինորա, կատակեին և  
 ասեին . ողջ եր (ճագատոր հրեից :

**ԺԷ** **Է** Ի վշտալ ինա, առնուին զեղեպն և ծեծեին  
 զգլուխ նորա :

**ԺԸ** Իսոր ժամ ճաղեցին զնա, մերկացուցին  
 ինանե պղծամիտն, և արտցրին նմա զլոր  
 հանդերձն : Եւ տարան զնա ի խաւ հանե լ :

**ԺԹ** Ի լեղեալ արտաքս գտին պրմի կիրենացի  
 անուն սիմոն, զնակալան պահակ զի  
 բարձրէ զխաւն նորա :

**ԺԽ** Ի մեկեալ խաւելին, անուանեալ Գողգոթա,  
 որեւեղի կատափելոյ :

**ԺԿ** Ի ետուն նմա ըմպել գինի ընդ լեղ ի  
 խաւնեալ : Եւ իբրեւ ճաշակեաց ողկամեր ըմպ  
 էլ :







Եւ յառաջեցուցեալ կախարիչ դրանս զե-  
րեղմանին վեղման մեծ փնայ :  
Եւ յաբար մարիամ մագարաղենայի, և միւս  
մարիամն նստեին հանդէս զ զե-  
րեղմանին :

Եւ յիսկիւն ժողովեցան քահանայապետքն և փա-  
րիսեցեքն առ ափղատուս և ասեն : տեք յիշե-  
ցաք զհմտորեցուցիչնայն ասեք մենչ կեն-  
դանենէր թէ յետ երեցաւորց յառնեալ :

Եւ ըզհրամայեալ զգոյշանալ զերեղմանին  
մենչեցերիս աստորս : զուցէ եկեալ աշակերտ  
քն զիշերի փողանայց ենդնալ : և ասեցեն թի-  
շովորեանն թէ յարեաւ ի մեռելոց : և լինիցի  
յետին մտորութենն չարքան զատալ ինն :

Եւ ասցնասա ափղատուս : ունիք զպատր ա-  
կանն և քի թաղք զգոյշապարտութեանս փառեք :





151, 152

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 5786)

1336, city of Sis, Cilicia

Written and illuminated by Sargis Pidzak

Parchment, 27 × 19 cm, 344 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 6 full-page and marginal historiated miniatures, marginals

Instead of the usual method of incorporating the illustrations into the text, adopted by most Cilician artists, Sargis Pidzak resorts to a compromise between the Oriental custom of grouping all the illustrations together and placing them before the text of the manuscript in a separate fascicle, and the Byzantine tradition of preceding each of the four Gospels with a full-page illustration: he places two miniatures before each of the Gospels. Apart from these, the manuscript contains a great number of marginal historiated miniatures which form a kind of reduced illustrative cycle. Thus, the motif of The Annunciation is represented only by the figure of the archangel, the episode of The Presentation in the Temple by an outline of a small church, etc.

**151\* THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN, f. 266**

The scene is presented in one of the few full-page miniatures of the manuscript. It is characterized by a graphic quality of pictorial language, the consecutive spatial planes being indicated only by the overlapping of figures.

The modelling of forms is achieved here not by the varied subtle shades of colour, but by alternation of the darker and lighter tones. The above-mentioned graphic quality is due to the prominent use of the linear method in the treatment of the figures and draperies. In spite of a reticence and lack of variety in the purely pictorial devices, the miniature displays the high level of artistry characteristic of Cilician book illustration.

**152\* THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST; THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, f. 105v**

The two miniatures occupying this page are treated in the highly decorative manner which is typical of Sargis Pidzak. The function of the Sepulchre of Lazarus, for example, is mainly ornamental; the same applies to the representation of the Jordan, of the rocks, and of the raiments and wings of the angels. The linear treatment of forms is given particular prominence in Pidzak's works and almost completely ousts the tonal modelling.











# THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA





153 The Virgin and Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom, f. 297v



153, 154

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7664)

1332, town of Surkhat, the Crimea

Written (and probably illuminated, in collaboration with other artists) by Grigor Sukiasants

Vellum, 21 × 16 cm, 435 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, 98 historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

The 1332 Gospels belongs to the small group of Crimean/Armenian manuscripts whose illumination was inspired by the art of the Palaeologan Renaissance.

The miniatures in the manuscript easily fall into two groups representing the work of two different masters, one of them probably being Grigor Sukiasants who is mentioned in the colophon as the scribe of the book.

**153 THE VIRGIN AND LAZARUS IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM**, f. 297v

The parable of Dives and Lazarus seems to lose its significance in view of the majestic figures of the Virgin and Abraham which dominate the foreground of the composition. The modelling of faces, figures, hands and the folds of the draperies is achieved by a skilful use of subtle tonal gradations, a technique which was further developed in the painting of modern times.

**154 THE MARRIAGE AT CANA**, f. 348v

Not only the manner of execution but also the facial types seen in this miniature were undoubtedly derived from Byzantine art. The treatment of the characters is remarkable for the delicately outlined ovals of their faces, without the dark contours typical of the majority of Armenian miniatures. The soft and delicate pictorial treatment is accompanied here by a freedom of figural arrangement and an obvious interest in rendering the visual effect of space and volume.

155, 156

**LECTIONARY** (Ms. 7408)

1356, town of Surkhat, the Crimea

Written by Karapet, illuminated by Arakel and Kirakos (?)

Vellum, 38 × 26.6 cm, 524 ff.

Title-pages, 3 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

The colophon of the Lectionary mentions the name of only one illuminator of the manuscript – Arakel. But comparison with a stylistically related manuscript signed by Kirakos (Venice, Mekhitarist Library, Monastery of St. Lazarus, Ms. 904) seems to prove the latter's participation in illustrating the Crimean Lectionary.

**155 THE ASCENSION**, f. 222

The scene is treated in accordance with the well-known canonical scheme. As far as the manner of representation is concerned, the artist combines two different artistic principles: while the treatment of the faces and hands betrays an attempt at rendering the effect of volume, the folds of the garments and the background remain somewhat schematic. Such dual character of representation was on the whole characteristic of the Crimean miniature.

**156 THE ANNUNCIATION**, f. 3v

The large-scale monumental figures of the Virgin and Gabriel are shown against the background of a pale green wall and of a dark blue sky – a type of background frequently occurring in works by the Crimean miniaturists.

The painting was undoubtedly executed by a highly proficient master who had a perfect command of figural treatment and a gift for modelling details. The miniature is particularly remarkable for its rich colouring, dominated by saturated blues and violets.

The lower frame contains an inscription by the illustrator, with his name unfortunately thoroughly rubbed out – probably by the other of the two artists, who did not want to share the credit for the work with a rival master.

157

**LECTIONARY** (Ms. 7741)

1360, town of Capha (now Theodosia), the Crimea

Written by Karapet; name of the illuminator unknown

Vellum, 32 × 22 cm, 484 ff.

Title-pages, 3 historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

The illumination of this Lectionary is in many ways similar to that of the 1365 manuscript (see Pls. 155, 156) and was probably done by the same masters – Arakel and Kirakos.

**157 TITLE-PAGE**, f. 4

The decor of the folio, obviously inspired by Cilician models, bears the mark of the Crimean artist's own manner: the ornamental forms are more generalized than their Cilician counterparts, the use of gold is more sparing, and the background is dark blue. The most remarkable feature of the decor is undoubtedly the treatment of the ornate initial, based on the motif of The Adoration of the Shepherds and composed of the figures of three shepherds, one blowing a pipe, the second carrying a sacrificial lamb, and the third about to perform the rite.



















158, 159

**THE BIBLE** (Ms. 2705)

13th–14th and 17th centuries

Bologna; the Crimea

Written by Arakel (13th century), Stepanos (14th century), Nikolayos (17th century)

Names of illuminators of the first two parts unknown; the third part (written by Nikolayos) illustrated by the scribe himself

Parchment, 29 × 21 cm, 487 ff.

Portraits of the Evangelists, first pages, title-pages, 6 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

The manuscript was begun in the thirteenth century in Bologna, Italy, and finished in 1368 in the Crimea. In the seventeenth century the initial parts of the Old Testament were rewritten and illuminated anew, also in the Crimea. Despite the different dates of their production the three sections of the manuscript produce a remarkably uniform impression due to the fact that each succeeding master apparently tried to remain faithful to the original stylistic principles.

158\* **THE APOCALYPSE**, f. 476v

Since the Apocalypse had long been relegated to apocryphal sources, it was not included into the biblical illustrative cycles until a relatively late date. The earliest Apocalypse illustrations found in Armenian illuminated manuscripts date from the late thirteenth (e.g. the 1269 Bible of Yerzynka) and the early fourteenth century (Lectionaries). This is also true for the miniature in question, which was executed at the end of the thirteenth century by an Armenian master in Bologna.

The treatment of the subject here is rather unusual: the God's throne is surrounded not by the conventional elders (Rev. 4:4) but by youths.

The miniature is stylistically related to late thirteenth-century Byzantine illumination, and in so far as its artistic quality is concerned it ranks among the best samples of Armenian book painting. In addition to expensive pigments and gold, the artist also used silver which effectively sets off the dark silhouettes of the angels.

159 **THE FOUR EVANGELISTS**, f. 334v

The miniature was produced in the Crimea by a master whose art is notable for the refinement and skill in the modelling of faces and for the softness and delicacy of his palette. The figures of the Evangelists strike by the magnificence of their rich attire. In accordance with the Cilician tradition which obviously was known to the Crimean master, St. Luke is represented with St. Theophilos.

Besides his own contribution to the illustrative cycle, the artist did some careful renewing of the miniatures by his predecessor from Bologna.

160

**THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS OF GRIGOR NAREKATSI** (Ms. 3863)

1401, town of Capha (now Theodosia), the Crimea

Written by Stepanos, illuminated by his son Hovhannes  
Parchment, 17.5 × 12.5 cm, 321 ff.

Title-pages, 4 historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

Although on the whole the miniatures in the manuscript conform to the current iconographic tradition, the treatment of characters and the general artistic manner bear a clear mark of the author's individuality. The latter is first and foremost manifest in his tentative but quite successful attempt to render the visual effect of depth and volume by means of the *chiaroscuro* technique, which means that he was familiar with contemporary Italian art.

160 **THE CRUCIFIXION**, f. 107v

This miniature serves as a perfect illustration of Hovhannes's style. His greatest success in so far as this scene is concerned is the image of the Virgin. The gently modelled face and hands, the graceful shape of her body, the skilfully rendered folds of her robe and cloak reminiscent of antique sculpture, and above all the emotional expressiveness of her figure and face bear witness to the artist's preference for the Proto-Renaissance art. At the same time Hovhannes was not yet completely free from the conventions of the old tradition; a realistic depiction of a nude body was still beyond his capacity, and the treatment of some compositional details remained rather schematic if not naive.













160 The Crucifixion, f. 107v



161, 162

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7644)

13th–14th centuries

Cilicia (the script and several miniatures); the Crimea (historiated miniatures)

Name of scribe unknown; illuminated by Avetik (second of the two illuminators unknown)

Parchment, 23.5 × 16.8 cm, 381 ff.

Khorans, portraits of the Evangelists, 8 full-page historiated miniatures, marginals, initials

The manuscript was copied in Cilicia for the prominent Cilician Constable Smbat. By the end of the thirteenth century it had changed hands and found its way to the Crimea, where it was supplemented with a series of historiated miniatures.

## 161 THE CRUCIFIXION, f. 117v

The miniature is based upon the iconographic pattern very rarely occurring in Armenian representations of The Passion cycle: apart from the usual attributes of the scene, the composition includes symbols of Ecclesia and Synagogue, of the Sun and the Moon, and also the figures of lamenting angels. In terms of its artistic and emotional impact this is one of the most expressive miniatures in the manuscript. The tragic atmosphere permeating the scene is felt not only in the figures, but also in the colouring, with its sombre shades of dark blue. The background represents the walls of Jerusalem (one bearing an inscription with the artist's signature).

## 162 THE DESCENT INTO LIMBO, f. 121v

Instead of the usual cross, Christ is depicted with a labarum in his hand. This detail, unusual for Armenian illumination, is undoubtedly a sign of Western influence, which was strongly felt in the Crimea in the fourteenth century. Catholicism was then a power which could not be ignored and which contributed to the diffusion of Italian art.

163

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7740)

1356–57, town of Sultania, Iran

Written and illuminated by Mkhitar Anetsi

Vellum, 29 × 21.5 cm, 393 ff.

Portraits of the Evangelists, 9 historiated miniatures, first pages, marginals, initials

## 163 THE ANNUNCIATION, f. 1v

Although the artist's cognomen – Anetsi – indicates that his native town was Ani (the medieval capital of Armenia), his creative work did not owe much to his homeland. His miniatures display a great measure of Persian influence: the characters have round rosy-cheeked faces, narrow almond-shaped eyes and arched eyebrows. Their costumes are reminiscent of bright-coloured Oriental robes girded with wide sashes; even the ornament of the framing, evocative of Persian tiles, has a definite Oriental flavour.

164

**THE GOSPELS** (Ms. 7628)

1331, Perugia, Italy

Written and probably illuminated by Jeremiah

Vellum, 24.5 × 16.5 cm, 164 ff.

First pages, marginals, initials

## 164 FIRST PAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW, f. 4

The illumination of the Perugia Gospels owes much to the Latin manuscript tradition. The influence of Latin illuminated Gospels is manifest in the Evangelists' portraits which are incorporated into the headpiece of the corresponding Gospel. The Evangelists are fair-haired and have tonsures which make them look like Roman Catholic priests.

Latin models are also discernible in the decorative initials and in the ornamentation of the page. The somewhat schematic treatment of details, however, as well as the lack of optical approach and the saturated colouring should be undoubtedly referred to the national Armenian tradition.



















2001

АРМЯНСКАЯ МИНИАТЮРА  
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## THE MATENADARAN, YEREVAN

The Maesrob Mashtotz Matenadaran in Yerevan, apart from being an important research centre, is the largest manuscript library in the world.

The building for the Matenadaran Library was erected in 1959 to the design by M. Grigorian. In the same year, the Matenadaran research centre was founded, with the purpose of studying and translating books by medieval Armenian scholars, writers and poets.

The Matenadaran is also an art museum, with regularly organized exhibitions of illuminated manuscripts of olden times. The most remarkable and aesthetically valuable examples of Armenian miniature art are those dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which is also the period covered by the present edition.

